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Patrick Byrne

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**

**CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

ROBERT HUNTER BIDEN, an  
individual,

Plaintiff,

vs.

PATRICK M. BYRNE, an individual,

Defendant.

Case No.: 2:23-cv-09430-SVW-PD  
Judge: Honorable Stephen V. Wilson  
Courtroom: "10A"

Complaint Filed: November 8, 2023

**DECLARATION OF MICHAEL C.  
MURPHY, ESQ. IN SUPPORT OF  
DEFENDANT PATRICK BYRNE'S  
NOTICE OF MOTION AND  
MOTION FOR SUMMARY  
JUDGMENT OR, IN THE  
ALTERNATIVE, SUMMARY  
ADJUDICATION**

*[Filed concurrently with the Notice of  
Motion and Motion for Summary  
Judgment; Defendant's Statement of  
Uncontroverted Facts; Request for  
Judicial Notice; Proposed Judgment]*

Date: November 25, 2024  
Time: 1:30 p.m.  
Courtroom: "10A"

**DECLARATION OF MICHAEL C. MURPHY, ESQ. IN SUPPORT OF DEFENDANT'S MOTION FOR SUMMARY  
JUDGMENT**

Case No.: 2:23-cv-09430-SVW-PD

I, Michael C. Murphy, Esq., declares as follows:

1. I am an attorney duly authorized and licensed to practice law before this Court and all the state courts located throughout the State of California. I am an attorney with the Law Offices of Michael C. Murphy, attorneys of record for Defendant Patrick Byrne. This Declaration is executed in support of Defendant's Motion for Summary Judgment or, in the Alternative, Partial Summary Judgment. I have personal knowledge of the facts stated in this Declaration and if called upon to testify, I would competently do so.

2. On November 8, 2023, Plaintiff Robert Hunter Biden ("Plaintiff") filed his complaint alleging a single cause of action for defamation per se. (A true and correct copy of Plaintiff's Complaint is heretofore attached as Exhibit A, incorporated herein, and made a part hereof.

3. On February 13, 2024, Defendant Patrick Byrne ("Defendant") filed his answer and affirmative defenses. (A true and correct copy of Defendant's Answer is heretofore attached as Exhibit B, incorporated herein, and made a part hereof.)

4. On August 16, 2024, I took the deposition of Plaintiff, Robert Hunter Biden. Attached hereto as Exhibit C are true and correct copies of pages 23-27, 31-33, 35-37, 41-43, 57, 65-71, 108-109, 118-124, 136, 140, 150-151, 159 and 187 of the certified deposition transcript for Robert Hunter Biden with the certification page by the court reporter.

5. Attached as Exhibit "D" are the Exhibits 610-612, 625, 627, 633, 635, 639, and 654 of said deposition that are attached to the certified transcript of Plaintiff Hunter Biden's and cited in the Separate Statement of Undisputed Facts are attached hereto.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the foregoing is true and correct. This Declaration was executed on October 28, 2024, at Westlake Village, CA.

LAW OFFICES OF MICHAEL C. MURPHY  
2625 Townsgate Road, Suite 330  
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By: /s/ Michael C. Murphy, Esq.

# Exhibit A

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15 ROBERT HUNTER BIDEN

16 **UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**  
17 **CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

18 ROBERT HUNTER BIDEN, an  
19 individual,

20 Plaintiff,

21 vs.

22 PATRICK M. BYRNE, an individual,  
23 Defendant.  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28

**Case No. 2:23-cv-09430**

**COMPLAINT FOR DAMAGES FOR  
DEFAMATION**

**DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL**

1 Plaintiff Robert Hunter Biden (aka Hunter Biden) (“Plaintiff”), for his claims  
2 against Defendant Patrick M. Byrne (“Byrne” or “Defendant”), alleges upon  
3 knowledge with respect to his own acts and upon information and belief as to all other  
4 matters, as follows:

### 5 **INTRODUCTION**

6 1. Plaintiff brings this action for defamation against Byrne because he has  
7 made, published, and repeated false and defamatory statements about Plaintiff,  
8 knowing full well that the statements are false, for the purpose of subjecting Plaintiff  
9 to harassment, intimidation, and harm. On or about June 27, 2023, Byrne published  
10 false statements that Plaintiff “was reaching out to the Iranian government in the fall of  
11 2021” and offering to have Plaintiff’s father, President Joe Biden, “unfreeze” \$8 billion  
12 in Iranian funds “in return for \$800 million being funneled into a numbered account for  
13 us.” Byrne further stated falsely that Plaintiff urged the Iranian government that, “if  
14 you do this deal with us, it will lubricate other negotiations which have recently started  
15 between us.” According to Byrne, “[b]y that, the Iranians believed that Hunter meant  
16 the [Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action] talks, which had restarted in Geneva a month  
17 or two previously.” These statements are completely false, and Byrne knew them to be  
18 false at the time he made them.

19 2. To make matters much worse, on or about October 8, 2023, shortly after  
20 news broke of the horrific terrorist attacks by Hamas on Israel that resulted in the  
21 slaughter of more than 1,400 civilians, Byrne reposted the false and defamatory  
22 statements about Plaintiff’s allegedly corrupt and treasonous dealings with Iran on X  
23 (formerly known and hereinafter referred to as Twitter), apparently so that his hundreds  
24 of thousands of social media followers and others would be reminded of the false  
25 statements Byrne initially had published in June. The clear implication of Byrne’s  
26 October 8, 2023 posts was that Plaintiff’s allegedly criminal and corrupt actions had  
27 contributed to the terrorist attacks by Hamas, that Plaintiff’s purported crimes had led  
28 to the deaths of more than 1,400 innocent civilians, and, more broadly, that Plaintiff



1 was a substantial factor in causing the recent outbreak of violence, war, and tragic death  
2 in the Middle East.

3 3. These defamatory statements by Byrne are not merely false and not merely  
4 malicious—they are completely outrageous. Byrne knows his statements are baseless  
5 and yet published and republished them anyway, and he continues to propagate his lies  
6 to anyone who will listen, including his hundreds of thousands of social media  
7 followers. Plaintiff would prefer to ignore Byrne and to deprive him of the attention  
8 that he so desperately seeks, but the shocking and appalling nature of Byrne's  
9 falsehoods needs to be addressed. Accordingly, Plaintiff brings this defamation action  
10 to hold Byrne accountable for his despicable statements and to deter him from engaging  
11 in such malicious conduct in the future.

### 12 **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

13 4. This Court has jurisdiction over the subject matter of this action pursuant  
14 to 28 U.S.C. § 1332.

15 5. The parties are of diverse citizenship. Plaintiff is a citizen of the State of  
16 California and resides in Los Angeles, California. Plaintiff is informed and believes  
17 that Defendant Byrne is a citizen of the State of Utah or the State of Florida and resides  
18 in both states.

19 6. The amount in controversy exceeds \$75,000, exclusive of interest and  
20 costs. Damages that Plaintiff has suffered and will continue to suffer as a result of the  
21 claims asserted herein exceed \$75,000.

22 7. Venue is proper in this judicial district pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391 as it  
23 is where a substantial part of the events giving rise to the claim alleged in this Complaint  
24 occurred, it is where the unlawful conduct by Defendant was directed, and it is where  
25 the harm to Plaintiff has been suffered.

26 8. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that Byrne  
27 intentionally directed his illegal conduct to occur in California and has therefore  
28 subjected himself to jurisdiction in California. In fact, Byrne called out to Plaintiff via

1 social media and issued a public challenge to Plaintiff to “[s]ue me,” presumably  
2 because he wants to be sued and wants the attention that a lawsuit will bring. At all  
3 relevant times, Plaintiff also has been a citizen and resident of California. He has  
4 suffered, and continues to suffer, from the severe impact of the defamatory statements  
5 in California.

## 6 **PARTIES**

7 9. Plaintiff is a citizen of the State of California and resides in Los Angeles,  
8 California.

9 10. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that Byrne is  
10 domiciled in either Utah or Florida and is a resident of both states. Byrne served as  
11 chief executive officer of Overstock.com until 2019, when he was forced to resign due  
12 to revelations that he had an affair with a Russian agent (now a Russian politician)  
13 named Maria Butina. Following his resignation from Overstock.com, Byrne spent  
14 significant time seeking to challenge and overturn the 2020 presidential election and  
15 promoting the idea that the election was “stolen,” including through his self-financed  
16 film called “The Big Rig.” On or about June 27, 2023, an online publication called  
17 “Capitol Times Magazine” published a lengthy profile of and “interview” with Byrne  
18 titled “The Emergence of a Controversial Man,” which included the defamatory  
19 statements about Plaintiff that are the subject of this action.

20 11. Byrne is no stranger to defamation claims and has shown himself to be a  
21 serial liar. In addition to a pending lawsuit arising from his stolen-election-related  
22 claims, Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that Byrne was previously  
23 court-ordered to pay a substantial judgment (including punitive damages) for falsely  
24 accusing a Canadian businessman of being a criminal and of having ties to Osama bin  
25 Laden in articles published on his DeepCapture.com website. See *Nazerali v. Mitchell*,  
26 No. 2016 BCSC 810 (Sup. Ct. B.C. Nov. 14, 2016), *Reasons for Judgment* at 97.

## 27 **FACTUAL BACKGROUND**

28 12. Since resigning from his position as chief executive officer of



1 Overstock.com in 2019, Byrne has emerged as a leading promoter of unsupported  
2 conspiracy theories, primarily relating to the so-called “Deep State” and to his claim  
3 that the 2020 presidential election was “stolen” from former President Donald Trump.  
4 Byrne insists that the violent uprising at the Capitol on January 6, 2021 was not an  
5 “insurrection,” but rather was a “fed-surrection” orchestrated by enemies of President  
6 Trump working within his own government. In a recent interview with the far-right  
7 conspiracy theorist and prolific spreader of proven lies, Alex Jones, Byrne described  
8 his ongoing fight to “de-Nazi-fy” our federal “institutions” and to rescue America from  
9 an ongoing plot by “globalists” to “colonize” the United States and turn it into a “vassal  
10 state” that will serve as “a farm to China.”

11 13. Despite the baseless and at times absurd nature of many of his claims,  
12 Byrne has a large following on social media and has been able to make money and to  
13 generate attention for himself by disseminating his unsupported theories through  
14 various means, including his self-published book, a self-financed film, and numerous  
15 interviews and appearances on right-wing media outlets. Byrne is a frequent user of  
16 Twitter and currently has more than 285,000 followers on that social media platform.  
17 He also posts regularly on Telegram and makes public statements through other means,  
18 including but not limited to his “DeepCapture.com” website.

19 14. Many of Byrne’s public statements consist of factually unsupported and  
20 impossible-to-verify claims about himself and the purportedly important role he claims  
21 to have played in various clandestine “operations” conducted on behalf of the “United  
22 States Government.” According to Byrne, he has carried out numerous secret spy  
23 “missions” for “Uncle Sam” (with cloak-and-dagger nicknames such as “Operation  
24 Snow Globe”) to advance United States interests around the world, including helping  
25 to restore “peaceful relations” in Vietnam in 1994, helping to prevent a war with Iran  
26 in 2006, assessing the “computer science capabilities” of Venezuela in 2018, and, of  
27 course, entering into an intimate relationship with 26 year-old Maria Butina, apparently  
28 as a means to help the FBI gather “intel” on Russia. (Byrne claims he let his FBI

1 handlers know: “I am not seeing Maria unless you folks use the word ‘greenlight’ with  
2 me. I got back a simple message: ‘Greenlight.’”)

3 15. Byrne further claims that, at times, the requests for him to deploy his  
4 “unique” skills to help the United States have come directly from the highest levels of  
5 the U.S. government, including, without limitation, President Barack Obama and FBI  
6 Director James Comey, personally, although they were communicated to Byrne  
7 verbally by unnamed special agents for the FBI.

8 16. Byrne frequently admits he has no documentation to support his self-  
9 aggrandizing claims—his “patriotic” activities have been too secret and dangerous for  
10 that and, besides, Byrne’s motto has always been “the fewer pieces of paper between  
11 us the better.” In one instance, Byrne claims to have asked his FBI contacts for written  
12 documentation reflecting the top-secret orders he was being given, but the request was  
13 denied. According to Byrne, “One agent said: ‘We’ve been instructed to inform you  
14 that you cannot be *given* a letter [as you have requested], but if you’ll come to DC, the  
15 Director says you can be *shown* a letter.’” Byrne claims he declined this offer because  
16 a verbal directive from Director Comey and President Obama “is good enough for me.”  
17 On another occasion, Byrne claims that Senator Arlen Specter and other Senate  
18 Judiciary Committee members told him that the country’s very survival rested entirely  
19 on Byrne’s shoulders. (“They simply told me that the republic was over unless I agreed  
20 to do this for them.” Byrne responded: “What can I say, Gentlemen? I won’t let you  
21 down.”)

22 17. To many people, Byrne’s assertions about himself and others are not  
23 merely outlandish but patently ridiculous. Unfortunately, however, to hundreds of  
24 thousands (at least) of others, Byrne’s claims are received in the manner they are  
25 intended—*i.e.*, as evidence-based statements of fact that should be accepted as truth.  
26 Furthermore, many of Byrne’s statements go well beyond merely inflating Byrne’s own  
27 importance and the role he claims to have played in shaping U.S. foreign policy and  
28 “disrupting corruption” within the federal government over the past 35 years—they

1 include false, defamatory, malicious, and extremely damaging statements of non-fact  
2 about others, including Plaintiff.

3 18. This lawsuit arises from the false and defamatory statements that Byrne  
4 made about Plaintiff in an “interview” that appeared in the “inaugural” issue of “Capitol  
5 Times Magazine,” which appears originally to have been published on or about June  
6 27, 2023. *See* Exhibit A.<sup>1</sup> In the course of that “interview,” Byrne defames Plaintiff  
7 by making false statements of fact that Plaintiff solicited hundreds of millions of dollars  
8 in bribes from the Iranian government in exchange for Plaintiff’s “family” releasing to  
9 Iran billions of dollars in frozen funds and ensuring that the United States would “go  
10 easy” on Iran during “nuclear talks” between the two countries.

11 19. The profile of and “interview” with Byrne in “Capitol Times Magazine,”  
12 which spans more than 80 pages, includes a lengthy introductory statement attributed  
13 to Michael Flynn, retired U.S. Army lieutenant general and former National Security  
14 Advisor under former President Trump, who praises Byrne for his “relentless pursuit  
15 of exposing the deep levels of corruption within our government.” Flynn endorses  
16 Byrne’s “Capitol Times Magazine” interview as follows: “The incredible story of  
17 bribery, blackmail, rape, murder and other tales, normally the stuff found in fiction  
18 novels, are the truth coming from a man who was asked to enable, encourage or conduct  
19 these actions on behalf of our very own government. Patrick’s story is for real, he’s for  
20 real, the corruption he’s exposed is for real, and it only gets worse the further you read.”

21 20. In the interview, Byrne purports to describe his various exploits  
22 advancing American interests and fighting “Deep State” corruption. On page 72 of the  
23 so-called magazine, Byrne turns to the topic of Plaintiff and his family. After  
24 describing his own alleged contacts within the Iranian government, Byrne makes the  
25

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26 <sup>1</sup> Although the profile of Byrne purports to feature a lengthy “interview” conducted  
27 during a walk along a “path” that Byrne “used to run in high school,” there are  
28 indications that the published “interview” is fake and that the answers were written  
and/or edited by Byrne himself. Exhibit A is a true and correct copy of excerpts from  
the “interview” and introductory remarks.



1 following statements about Plaintiff:

2 So in November 2021, I went back to the Middle East. I met with a group  
3 including a special Iranian figure, an old friend who let me know a World  
4 War was coming, and had a proposal to avert it. I told them I would relay  
5 the proposal but I did not think it would fly.

6  
7 In the course of being there, and through a mechanism I am not going to  
8 explain here, I became aware of an additional situation. Hunter Biden was  
9 reaching out to the Iranian government in the fall of 2021 with the  
10 following offer: *You Iranians have \$8 billion frozen in a bank account in*  
11 *South Korea. My father will unfreeze it in return for \$800 million being*  
12 *funneled into a numbered account for us. And if you do this deal with us,*  
13 *it will lubricate other negotiations which have recently started between us.*

14 By that, the Iranians believed that Hunter meant the JCPOA talks, which  
15 had restarted in Geneva a month or two previously. In other words,  
16 something along the lines of, "Pay us \$100 million and we let you keep 10  
17 nukes, \$200 million for 20 nukes," etc. But I am making up the pricing.  
18 Hunter was doing this through a middleman, the son of the Minister of  
19 Defense of Pakistan. That son was meeting with Hunter, then relaying  
20 messages to someone in Iran. And he was being reckless enough to leave  
21 voicemails in Iran about it.

22  
23 When I returned, the agencies went to work over the weekend. I was told  
24 a week later that they had confirmed it all. The voice on the voicemail that  
25 I had acquired was voice-matched to the son of the Minister of Defense of  
26 Pakistan, who had a connection to Hunter Biden. Anyway, in December,  
27 2021, I was told that the scheme was confirmed across the agencies.

28 Exhibit A at 72-73 (emphasis in original).

1           21. In response to these false and defamatory statements, the unidentified  
2 “interviewer” for “Capitol Times Magazine” asked Byrne to confirm what he was  
3 saying:

4           Patrick, you are claiming that 18 months ago, the Biden Family was  
5 seeking a bribe from Iran to release funds frozen in South Korea, and to go  
6 easy in nuclear talks, and that the United States Government has been  
7 aware of this since December, 2021?

8 Byrne responded: “100% correct.” *Id.* at 73.

9           22. Byrne’s false statements about Plaintiff were expressed and intended to be  
10 understood as statements of fact. This is apparent from the statements themselves in  
11 which Byrne affirms that his allegations about Plaintiff are “100% correct.” This also  
12 is apparent from the context in which the false statements appear, including Flynn’s  
13 introductory comments stating Byrne’s story is the “truth” and “real.” The first page  
14 of “Capitol Times Magazine” welcomes its readers with the following commitment to  
15 providing them with factually accurate information: “We are thrilled to have you join  
16 our readership, where we strive to deliver accurate and unbiased news straight from the  
17 heart of US Capitol politics to the broader global landscape. In an era dominated by  
18 sensationalism and misinformation, we stand firmly committed to providing you with  
19 the truth. . . . Thank you for choosing Capitol Times Magazine as your source for truth  
20 news. We are honored to have you on board, and we look forward to embarking on  
21 this journey of knowledge and enlightenment together.” In the “interview” and in  
22 media appearances, Byrne frequently states that, although his claims might seem  
23 unlikely and hard for people to believe, they are 100% factually true, they are proven  
24 by evidence that Byrne at one time possessed, and they have been verified and  
25 confirmed by unnamed high-ranking officials in the U.S. and Iranian governments.

26           23. Shortly before publishing his false accusations against Plaintiff in the  
27 “Capitol Times Magazine” article, Byrne aired the defamatory statements during media  
28 appearances and in public. For example, on May 10 and 11, 2023, Byrne appeared on



1 *The Absolute Truth* with Emerald Robinson, a former “White House correspondent”  
2 for Newsmax and One America News Network with a significant social media  
3 following of her own, and published his lies—later published in the article—accusing  
4 Plaintiff of having engaged in a bribery scheme with Iran, again without providing a  
5 shred of factual support. In particular, during the May 10, 2023 interview (which was  
6 re-aired on May 11, 2023), Byrne falsely claimed, among other things, that in  
7 November 2021 Plaintiff “was reaching out back-channel to the Iranian government  
8 with this proposal: ‘You Iranians have \$8 billion frozen in a South Korean bank, my  
9 father will sign to unfreeze it in return for \$800 million funneled into a numbered  
10 account for us and if you will do this it will lubricate the other discussions which have  
11 recently started between us,’ by which, since this conversation was late November  
12 2021, the Iranians took to mean the recently started nuclear negotiations. The Bidens  
13 were holding up their hand and saying you pay us this you can keep 10 nukes, you pay  
14 us this you can keep 20 nukes, they were offering that kind of a deal.”

15 24. When asked by Robinson during a follow up interview on May 11, 2023  
16 to explain how he came to possess the “information” on which his criminal accusations  
17 against Plaintiff were based, Byrne reiterated his defamatory charges: “I met an old  
18 friend . . . I don’t want to name names . . . I became aware of something that had  
19 happened—that Hunter Biden was reaching out to [Iran] back channel and there are  
20 actually some voicemails that confirmed everything I am telling you . . . an interagency  
21 group centered in the FBI . . . was able to confirm 100% everything I’ve told you.” The  
22 on-screen banners that appeared beneath Byrne stated, among other things, “Byrne:  
23 Hunter Biden Used Back Channel to Speak to Iran”; “Byrne Maps Out the Biden  
24 Family Corruption”; and “Patrick Byrne Drops Bombshell Allegations Regarding  
25 Hunter Biden and Iran.” During the interview, Byrne emphatically insisted that his  
26 false allegations against Plaintiff are true, that they are based on evidence he “stole”  
27 from someone in Iran, and that they have been verified as true by others. Byrne further  
28 claimed that his “evidence”—which he no longer possesses because he purportedly

1 turned it over to the government—is “so politically radioactive” that FBI Director  
2 Christopher Wray had to “disband” an “interagency group because it had reached the  
3 core of government corruption and I had brought them four massive loads [of  
4 evidence], including that Hunter Biden and Joe Biden are selling out the country to  
5 Iran.” These false statements by Byrne during his interviews on *The Absolute Truth*  
6 remain publicly available on-line to this day.

7 25. In addition, following its original publication, Byrne has repeatedly  
8 published the “Capitol Times Magazine” profile on social media and has promoted the  
9 article during right-wing media appearances, encouraging people to read and purchase  
10 copies of the magazine for themselves. For example, in a July 21, 2023 appearance on  
11 *The Alex Jones Show*, infamous host Alex Jones, who has described Byrne as a “friend  
12 of [his] show,” discusses with Byrne their shared opinion that the January 6 riot was a  
13 “fed-surrection” orchestrated by the “Deep State,” “antifa,” and other anti-Trump  
14 forces. Early in the interview, Jones confirms that he had received a copy of the  
15 “Capitol Times Magazine” article from Byrne, holds it up for the camera, and  
16 recommends it to his viewers as “big news” that Jones personally “can’t wait to read.”  
17 Byrne highlights for Jones the introductory statement by Flynn and persuades Jones to  
18 read the statement in its entirety out loud, including Flynn’s endorsement that Byrne’s  
19 “incredible story of bribery, blackmail, rape, murder and other tales . . . are the truth”  
20 and that “Patrick’s story is for real, he’s for real, the corruption he’s exposed is for real,  
21 and it only gets worse the further you read.”

22 26. Plaintiff is informed and believes that Byrne has promoted, disseminated,  
23 and republished his defamatory statements about Plaintiff many times over the past  
24 several months and has falsely claimed on multiple occasions that the defamatory  
25 statements contained in the article, including the false accusations against Plaintiff, are  
26 factually true and that they have been “confirmed” by Flynn and various federal  
27 “agencies.” In reality, Byrne’s accusations against Plaintiff are completely false, they  
28 are untethered from reality, and they have not been “confirmed” by anyone ever.

1           27. Byrne made matters much worse on the early morning of October 8, 2023.  
2       Shortly after news broke of the horrific terrorist attacks by Hamas against Israel, Byrne  
3       twice reposted an excerpt of his “Capitol Times Magazine” profile—including his false  
4       and defamatory statements about Plaintiff—on his social media account on Twitter.  
5       Byrne’s re-postings of his false statements about Plaintiff were intended to suggest that  
6       Plaintiff and his alleged criminal dealings with Iran had contributed to the terrorist  
7       attacks by Hamas against Israel, had brought about more than 1,400 civilian deaths,  
8       and had been a substantial factor in causing events that led to what is currently  
9       a massive conflict in the Middle East. These re-postings by Byrne have been viewed  
10      by more than 100,000 people. True and correct copies of these posts are attached hereto  
11      as Exhibit B.

12           28. Byrne’s defamatory claims that Plaintiff engaged in criminal actions with  
13      a country whose government is widely considered an enemy of the United States are  
14      completely false. Plaintiff never entered into any negotiations with any Iranian official  
15      about anything, let alone about the topics in the article. Nor did Plaintiff ever engage  
16      in any back-channel discussions with Iran—whether through the “son of the Minister  
17      of Defense of Pakistan” or otherwise—for the purpose of enriching himself or his  
18      family, betraying his country, or any other reason. Similarly, Plaintiff never  
19      communicated anything to any Iranian officials to suggest that he was willing to accept  
20      a bribe, or to suggest that he was willing to assist them in releasing billions of dollars  
21      in frozen Iranian funds, or to signal that he was willing to help them achieve their  
22      nuclear aspirations in negotiations with the United States. These claims are complete  
23      nonsense. To falsely accuse Plaintiff of engaging in these criminal acts is not only  
24      reckless and baseless but utterly outrageous and despicable, and it constitutes  
25      defamation per se.

26           29. Byrne knew that the statements he made about Plaintiff in “Capitol Times  
27      Magazine” and on social media were false, or, at the very least, he had serious doubts  
28      as to their truth. Byrne claims he discovered this information from sources (which he



1 has refused to name) including “an old friend who let me know a World War was  
2 coming” and “a mechanism I am not going to explain here.” These purported unnamed  
3 “sources” are unreliable on their face. Byrne has identified no actual sources and no  
4 actual evidence for any of his defamatory claims. This is not surprising because no  
5 sources or evidence exist. Byrne has no reasonable, valid, or factual basis to make such  
6 outrageous accusations against Plaintiff in the “interview,” on social media, or  
7 anywhere else.

8 30. Byrne has been told that his allegations are false, that they are causing  
9 serious harm to Plaintiff, and that they should be retracted immediately. Rather than  
10 retract, however, Byrne has doubled down. After his October 8, 2023 post suggesting  
11 Plaintiff had facilitated the terrorist attacks by Hamas on Israel, Representative Eric  
12 Swalwell responded to Byrne on Twitter that his defamatory post “is sick and is going  
13 to get the president’s son killed. Israel needs help, not this.” Byrne responded by  
14 bragging to his social media followers: “Eric Swalwell posting trash about me? I must  
15 have touched a nerve,” and, “Hey Eric, thanks but you forgot the citation!” followed  
16 by a link to his DeepCapture.com website and the “Capitol Times Magazine” article.  
17 True and correct copies of these posts are attached hereto as Exhibit C.

18 31. By letter dated October 26, 2023, Plaintiff’s counsel sent a formal demand  
19 for retraction to Byrne identifying the false and defamatory statements at issue in this  
20 case. Plaintiff’s letter notified Byrne that his accusations against Plaintiff were false,  
21 that they were extremely harmful, and that they should be retracted immediately. To  
22 date, Byrne has ignored Plaintiff’s retraction demand and has taken no steps to disavow  
23 his false claims or to mitigate the harm that his claims have caused and are continuing  
24 to inflict on Plaintiff.

25 **FIRST CLAIM FOR RELIEF**

26 **(Defamation)**

27 **(Against Defendant Byrne)**

28 32. Plaintiff incorporates herein by this reference the allegations in

1 paragraphs 1 through 31, above.

2 33. As set forth above, Defendant falsely stated in an “interview” published in  
3 the “inaugural” issue of “Capitol Times Magazine” that Plaintiff sought hundreds of  
4 millions of dollars in bribes from the Iranian government for the purpose of enriching  
5 himself and his family at the expense of the interests of the United States and its allies.  
6 Beginning on or about June 27, 2023, Defendant repeatedly published this so-called  
7 magazine “interview,” including his false statements about Plaintiff, on social media  
8 including Twitter and Telegram and through other means including his  
9 DeepCapture.com website.

10 34. Plaintiff is informed and believes that Defendant has taken steps to ensure  
11 that the interview, including his defamatory statements about Plaintiff, have been  
12 continuously published from the date of their first publication to this day. Byrne has  
13 relentlessly promoted the article, including, but not limited to, on social media and  
14 during media appearances on shows such as *The Alex Jones Show*; he has marketed and  
15 sold the “magazine” on Amazon, Walmart, and Barnes & Noble; and he has encouraged  
16 others to purchase the article, download it, and distribute it to as many others as  
17 possible. Defendant has also claimed that the article is potentially going to be made  
18 into a book and possibly even a movie. The full extent to which Defendant has  
19 published, distributed, marketed, and sold the defamatory statements about Plaintiff  
20 will be the subject of discovery in this case.

21 35. Defendant specifically intended and reasonably understood that the false  
22 statements that he made were about Plaintiff. Defendant identified Plaintiff by name,  
23 made clear that he was accusing Plaintiff of engaging in criminal activity, and, in  
24 response to the “interviewer’s” question as to whether he was actually leveling such  
25 serious charges against Plaintiff, stated the allegations are “100% correct.”

26 36. The statements made by Defendant about Plaintiff in the “interview,” and  
27 published, republished, and repeated by Byrne on social media and in media  
28 appearances, were false.



1           37. The published statements are inherently harmful because they falsely  
2 impute that Plaintiff committed despicable and treasonous crimes, and they expose  
3 Plaintiff to hatred, ridicule, and contempt.

4           38. Defendant's defamatory statements about Plaintiff constitute defamation  
5 per se because the statements are defamatory on their face, and nothing needs to be  
6 added or explained to make their defamatory meaning understood. Moreover, the  
7 defamatory statements are defamatory per se because they explicitly and falsely charge  
8 Plaintiff with criminal activity and with engaging in unethical, illegal, and treasonous  
9 conduct. Thus, general damages in favor of Plaintiff are presumed as a matter of law.

10           39. Defendant knew that his statements were false, had no basis to believe in  
11 their truth, acted in reckless disregard and/or had serious doubts about the truth of his  
12 statements, and made these statements with actual malice.

13           40. The evidence of actual malice is clear, convincing, and overwhelming.  
14 Defendant's accusations against Plaintiff are, by Defendant's own admission,  
15 inherently improbable. Defendant acknowledged the inherent improbability of his  
16 allegations in the "interview" itself and during various media appearances. When  
17 Defendant's false claims have been met with skepticism due to their outrageous nature,  
18 Defendant has repeatedly doubled down, claiming for example that, despite the over-  
19 the-top nature of his claims, they are "100% correct." At one point in the "interview,"  
20 Defendant is asked if he knows how "unlikely" aspects of his story sound, and  
21 Defendant responds: "Yes I do. . . . It probably checks all the boxes on megalomania  
22 with delusions of grandeur. All I can say is: it happened."

23           41. Defendant's actual malice is also proven by the extraordinary lengths to  
24 which Defendant has gone to give the false impression that his accusations are based  
25 on evidence and have been verified by trusted sources. For example, Defendant insists  
26 that his false allegations are supported by forensic evidence (a "voicemail" that has  
27 been "voice-matched") and have been verified by federal law enforcement sources ("I  
28 was told the scheme was verified across the agencies."). Defendant has never identified

1 any actual source—reliable or otherwise—that supports his outrageous claims. Instead,  
2 Defendant has been intentionally vague, referring to unnamed shadowy figures  
3 operating within the U.S. and Iranian governments as well as an unnamed relative of  
4 an unnamed government official in Pakistan. Plaintiff is informed and believes and  
5 thereon alleges that Defendant has no legitimate sources for his false allegations against  
6 Plaintiff and that, to the extent that any “sources” for any aspect of his claims do exist,  
7 they are completely unreliable.

8 42. Similarly, Defendant’s actual malice is proven by the fact that he has made  
9 false claims about his purported efforts to verify information on which the accusations  
10 are based. For example, Defendant claims that he obtained information supporting his  
11 false accusations while visiting the “Middle East” in November 2021 and meeting with  
12 “a group including a special Iranian figure, an old friend who let me know a World War  
13 was coming, and had a proposal to avert it.” Defendant further claims: “In the course  
14 of being there, and through a mechanism I am not going to explain here, I became aware  
15 of an additional situation. Hunter Biden was reaching out to the Iranian government in  
16 the fall of 2021. . . .” Defendant also claims somehow to have “stolen” some “evidence”  
17 while in Iran, but apparently now says that he no longer has the evidence in his  
18 possession because it was “turned over” to the federal government. Plaintiff is  
19 informed and believes and thereon alleges that, in reality, Defendant conducted no  
20 meaningful investigation regarding his false allegations, and, to the extent that any  
21 “investigation” occurred, it was conducted in a way that was patently unreasonable and  
22 not intended to discover the truth. Moreover, Defendant does not have—and has never  
23 possessed—any credible “evidence” to support his false allegations. Defendant’s  
24 malice is shown by the fact that he is impervious to reality and common sense, refusing  
25 to acknowledge the absurdity of his accusations and the overwhelming evidence that  
26 refutes them.

27 43. Defendant’s actual malice is also proven by the fact Defendant harbors ill  
28 will toward Plaintiff and his family. For the past several years, Defendant has dedicated

1 himself to proving that the 2020 presidential election was stolen from former President  
2 Trump and that the “Biden family,” including Plaintiff, are “corrupt” and are actively  
3 participating in a “Deep State” conspiracy to destroy the United States. The timing and  
4 content of his false statements, particularly after the October 7, 2023 Hamas attacks,  
5 are further evidence of his hatred and ill-will toward Plaintiff.

6 44. Other evidence of Defendant’s actual malice includes, without limitation,  
7 the fact that Defendant has peddled his false accusations against Plaintiff on programs  
8 such as *The Alex Jones Show*, which have demonstrated a propensity for spreading  
9 proven lies in the past without regard to the harm those lies inflict upon others; the fact  
10 that Defendant continues to share his false accusations on social media platforms; the  
11 fact that Defendant has sought to profit from his lies, marketing and selling them on his  
12 DeepCapture.com website as well as on Amazon, Walmart, and Barnes & Noble; the  
13 fact that Defendant has been found liable for defamation in prior litigation; and the fact  
14 that Defendant has refused to comply or even to respond to Plaintiff’s demand for  
15 retraction.

16 45. As a result of Defendant’s wrongful conduct, Plaintiff has suffered harm  
17 to his reputation and has suffered shame, mortification, and embarrassment.

18 46. Defendant’s conduct was a substantial factor in causing Plaintiff’s  
19 damages, harm, and injuries alleged herein, all in amounts according to proof and in  
20 excess of the jurisdictional minimum of this Court.

21 47. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that the  
22 aforementioned acts of Defendant were willful, oppressive, fraudulent, and/or  
23 malicious. The conduct of Defendant in publishing these false statements about  
24 Plaintiff, with knowledge of their falsity, for the express purpose of harming Plaintiff  
25 is intentional and despicable. Plaintiff is therefore entitled to punitive and exemplary  
26 damages.



**JURY TRIAL DEMAND**

Plaintiff hereby respectfully demands a jury trial in this action.

**PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

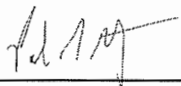
WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays for relief as follows:

- A. For general damages to be proven at trial;
- B. For punitive damages to be proven at trial for Defendant's willful, deliberate, and malicious actions;
- C. For prejudgment interest;
- D. For an order awarding Plaintiff his reasonable attorneys' fees and costs; and
- E. For such other and further relief as this Court may deem to be just and proper.

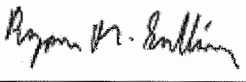
Respectfully submitted,

Dated: November 8, 2023

WINSTON & STRAWN LLP

By:   
Paul Salvaty  
Abbe David Lowell  
Attorneys for Plaintiff

EARLY SULLIVAN WRIGHT  
GIZER & McRAE LLP

By:   
Bryan M. Sullivan  
Zachary C. Hansen  
Attorneys for Plaintiff

## **EXHIBIT A**



THE INAUGURAL ISSUE

# CAPITOL

## TIMES MAGAZINE

Issue 1 - July 2023



### UNRAVELING THE RECESSION:

Why America Needs  
a New Commander-  
in-Chief

### PROMOTING INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY:

Balancing Personal  
Freedoms and  
Government  
Intervention

### DEFENDING NATIONAL SECURITY:

Prioritizing a Strong  
Military and Secure  
Borders



# PATRICK BYRNE

FOUNDER OF OVERSTOCK.COM

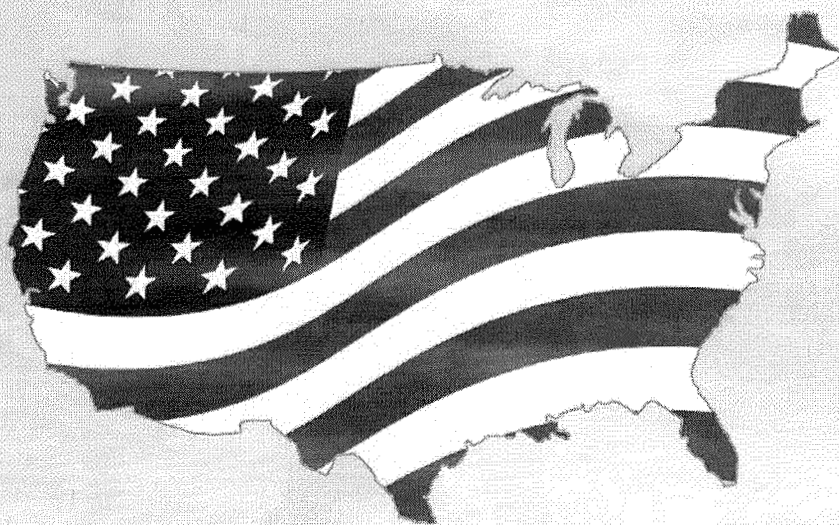
DHS DOMESTIC EXTREMIST #1 COMES CLEAN







# HAPPY INDEPENDENCE Day



## 4TH OF JULY

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# WELCOME TO CAPITOL TIMES MAGAZINE!

We are thrilled to have you join our readership, where we strive to deliver accurate and unbiased news straight from the heart of US Capitol politics to the broader global landscape. In an era dominated by sensationalism and misinformation, we stand firmly committed to providing you with the truth.

At Capitol Times, we understand the importance of staying informed about the political developments that shape our world. We believe that knowledge is power, and our dedicated team of journalists works tirelessly to bring you comprehensive coverage, insightful analysis, and in-depth features on the pressing issues of ourtime. From the corridors of power in Washington D.C. to the farthest corners of the globe, our magazine aims to present a holistic view of politics, ensuring that you have a well-rounded understanding of the forces shaping our collective future. We believe that it is through awareness and understanding that we can make informed decisions and actively participate in shaping a better society.

As you embark on this journey with us, we invite you to explore the diverse range of topics we cover. From domestic policies to international relations, from social justice to environmental concerns, we strive to provide a rich tapestry of information that reflects the complexity of our world. Our commitment to truth and integrity means that we are dedicated to upholding the highest journalistic standards.

We rigorously fact-check our articles and adhere to ethical reporting practices, aiming to present you with the most reliable and accurate information available. We understand that trust is the cornerstone of our relationship, and we value it above all else.

In addition to our news coverage, Capitol Times Magazine offers thought-provoking opinion pieces, engaging interviews, and profiles of influential figures in the political arena. We encourage you to actively engage with our content, to question, to challenge, and to share your own perspectives. Together, we can foster a vibrant community of informed citizens who are passionate about making a difference.

Thank you for choosing Capitol Times Magazine as your source for truth news. We are honored to have you on board, and we look forward to embarking on this journey of knowledge and enlightenment together. Welcome to the Capitol Times family!

Sincerely,

Capitol Times Magazine  
[www.capitoltimesmedia.com](http://www.capitoltimesmedia.com)



CAPITOL TIMES MAGAZINE | ISSUE 1 | JULY 2023

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Prioritizing a Strong Military and Secure Borders

By Johnson Hall







# THE INAUGURAL ISSUE

Volume one | July 2023

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## CONTRIBUTORS

Mary Jones | Andrew Joseph | Johnson Hall | Anil Anwar

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### Statement by General Michael T Flynn

"Through my work as a senior intelligence officer in the world of national security and special operations, I have known about the courageous work Patrick Byrne has been directed to do on behalf of the United States Government. Most people don't understand the work of 'national intelligence assets' but that is what Patrick has been asked to be when it comes to the opaque world of government-to-government relationships. He's been placed into extremely difficult positions and has had to use his judgment to understand how to best accomplish his directed missions to the best of his ability.

This takes extraordinary judgment and courage. I've gotten to personally know Patrick over the past few years because of his USG directed role in rooting out corruption. He has been unshakable when it comes to his relentless pursuit of exposing the deep levels of corruption within our government. For a man who thought his life would be spent engaging an overseas adversary, he found himself battling his own government.

The incredible story of bribery, blackmail, rape, murder and other tales, normally the stuff found in fiction novels, are the truth coming from a man who was asked to enable, encourage or conduct these actions on behalf of our very own government. Patrick's story is for real, he's for real, the corruption he's exposed is for real, and it only gets worse the further you read."



Now let me move on from the election and get to something more urgent. Are you ready?

***You have stories that top that?***

In 2021, it was made known to me that there were still agents looking out for me. Over time it was gradually revealed to me that there was an inter-agency team of some sort, spread across a dozen agencies, that had become the hot ticket within the three letter agencies, a group of super-agents, O-5 and O-6 level, who were in an inter-agency group dedicated to reverse engineering the corruption attacking the USA. I came to think of them as a "League of Shadows" who were looking out for me.

In September 2021 the Iranian government reached out asking to see me. This is why I told you as much about our relationship as I did earlier. Iran contacted me again and let me know a big war was coming, and their call to me had something to do with peace.

I stalled them, and let the League of Shadows know about it, letting them know I was reluctant to get involved but I would do as directed. It was only at that point that they revealed themselves to me in person. They studied it for some weeks, then instructed me to accept the offer to meet. I specifically confirmed, "You have checked with X, you have checked with Y?" They confirmed they had checked with everyone and it had been signed off on across-the-board.

So in November 2021, I went back to the Middle East. I met with a group including a special Iranian figure, an old friend who let me know a World War was coming, and had a proposal to avert it. I told them I would relay the proposal but I did not think it would fly.

In the course of being there, and through a mechanism I am not going to explain here, I became aware of an additional situation. Hunter Biden was reaching out to the Iranian government in the fall of 2021 with the following offer: *You Iranians have \$8 billion frozen in a bank account in South Korea. My father will unfreeze it in return for \$800 million being funneled into a numbered account for us. And if you do this deal with us, it will lubricate other negotiations which have recently started between us.* By that, the Iranians believed that Hunter meant the JCPOA talks, which had restarted in Geneva a month or two previously. In other words, something along the lines of, "Pay us \$100 million and we let you keep 10 nukes, \$200 million for 20 nukes," etc. But I am making up the pricing.

Hunter was doing this through a middleman, the son of the Minister of Defense of Pakistan. That son was meeting with Hunter, then relaying messages to someone in Iran. And he was being reckless enough to leave voicemails in Iran about it.



When I returned, the agencies went to work over the weekend. I was told a week later that they had confirmed it all. The voice on the voicemail that I had acquired was voice-matched to the son of the Minister of Defense of Pakistan, who had a connection to Hunter Biden. Anyway, in December, 2021, I was told that the scheme was confirmed across the agencies.

***Patrick, you are claiming that 18 months ago, the Biden Family was seeking a bribe from Iran to release funds frozen in South Korea, and to go easy in nuclear talks, and that the United States Government has been aware of this since December, 2021?***












100% correct.



## **EXHIBIT B**

11/2/23, 8:11 AM

(3) Patrick Byrne on X: "Hear hear." / X

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Patrick Byrne  
@PatrickByrne

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Hear hear.

**AzPinkLady #SaveArizona #SaveAmerica** · @AzPinkLady · Oct 8

Replying to @virtu4lm3me5 and @LauraLoomer

Of course it was planned. Our government knew in 2021 that the Biden crime family was negotiating deals with Iran.

@RepJamesComer did you find an Iranian transfer yet?

...  
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ber 2021, I went back  
with a group includi  
, an old friend who le  
was coming, and had  
ld them I would relay  
think it would fly.

became aware of an additional situation. Hunter Biden was reaching out to the Iranian government in the fall of 2021 with the following offer: You Iranians have \$8 billion frozen in a bank account in South Korea. My father will unfreeze it in return for \$800 million being funneled into a numbered account for us. And if you do this deal with us, it will lubricate other Patrick, you are claiming that 18 months ago, the Biden Family was seeking a bribe from Iran to release funds frozen in South Korea, and to go easy in nuclear talks, and that the United States Government has been aware of this since December, 2021?

100% correct.

2:00 AM · Oct 8, 2023 · 32.8K Views

26

181

438

11



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11/2/23, 8:15 AM

(3) Patrick Byrne on X: "https://t.co/X5fVN9UhpU" / X



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So in November 2021, I went back to the Middle East. I met with a group including a special Iranian figure, an old friend who let me know a World War was coming, and had a proposal to avert it. I told them I would relay the proposal but I did not think it would fly.

In the course of being there, and through a mechanism I am not going to explain here, I became aware of an additional situation. Hunter Biden was reaching out to the Iranian government in the fall of 2021 with the following offer: *You Iranians have \$8 billion frozen in a bank account in South Korea. My father will unfreeze it in return for \$800 million being funneled into a numbered account for us. And if you do this deal with us, it will lubricate other negotiations which have recently started between us.* By that, the Iranians believed that Hunter meant the JCPOA talks, which had restarted in Geneva a month or two previously. In other words, something along the lines of, "Pay us \$100 million and we let you keep 10 nukes, \$200 million for 20 nukes," etc. But I am making up the pricing.

2:01 AM · Oct 8, 2023 · 71.4K Views

137

442

768

88



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## **EXHIBIT C**



11/2/23, 8:15 AM

(3) Patrick Byrne on X: "Eric Swalwell posting trash about me? I must have touched a nerve." / X



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Eric Swalwell posting trash about me? I must have touched a nerve.

**Rep. Eric Swalwell** @RepSwalwell · Oct 8

MAGA GOP aren't serious about defending Israel. They just want to own the Libs. Of course for them it all comes back to Hunter Biden. That's all they know: Noun, verb, Hunter Biden.

This post is sick and is going to get the president's son killed. ...  
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So in November 2021, I went back to the Middle East. I met with a group including a special Iranian figure, an old friend who let me know a World War was coming, and had a proposal to avert it. I told them I would relay the proposal but I did not think it would fly.

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3:38 PM · Oct 17, 2023 · 31.3K Views



61



89



308



2



Post your reply

Reply

11/2/23, 8:14 AM

(3) Patrick Byrne on X: "Hey Eric, thanks but you forgot the citation! https://t.co/WtF6tXA6u" / X



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Patrick Byrne  
@PatrickByrne

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Hey Eric, thanks but you forgot the citation!

deepcapture.com/2023/07/patric...

Rep. Eric Swalwell · Oct 8

MAGA GOP aren't serious about defending Israel. They just want to own the Libs. Of course for them it all comes back to Hunter Biden. That's all they know: Noun, verb, Hunter Biden.

This post is sick and is going to get the president's son killed. ...  
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In the course of being there, and through a mechanism I am not going to explain here, I became aware of an additional situation. Hunter Biden was reaching out to the Iranian



Post

government in the fall of 2021 with the following offer: You Iranians have \$6 billion frozen in a bank account in South Korea. My father will unfreeze it in return for \$800 million being funneled into a numbered account for us. And if you do this deal with us, it will lubricate other negotiations which have recently started between us. By that, the Iranians believed that Hunter meant the JCPOA talks, which had restarted in Geneva a month or two previously. In other words, something along the lines of, "Pay us \$100 million and we let you keep 10 nukes, \$200 million for 20 nukes," etc. But I am making up the pricing.

3:52 PM · Oct 17, 2023 · 16.9K Views

20

42

122

2



Post your reply

Reply

# Exhibit B

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11 Attorneys for Defendant  
12 PATRICK M. BYRNE

13 **UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**  
14 **CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**  
15

16 ROBERT HUNTER BIDEN

17 Plaintiff,

18 v.

19 PATRICK M. BYRNE

20 Defendant.  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28

Case No.: 2:23-cv-09430-SVW-PD

**DEFENDANT'S ANSWER AND  
AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSES**

Complaint Filed: November 8, 2023



1 NOW COMES undersigned, Attorneys for Defendant, Patrick M. Byrne, and  
2 for his Answer to Plaintiff's Complaint in the above-captioned case, states as  
3 follows:

#### 4 INTRODUCTION

5 1. In the Answer to Paragraph one (1) of Plaintiff's Complaint, Defendant  
6 admits that Plaintiff brings an action for defamation. Defendant neither admits nor  
7 denies that he posted statements on social media concerning Plaintiff. Defendant  
8 denies the balance of the allegations.

9 2. In Answer to Paragraph two (2) of Plaintiff's Complaint, Defendant  
10 neither admits nor denies that he posted statements on social media concerning  
11 Plaintiff. Defendant denies the balance of the allegations in this paragraph.

12 3. In Answer to Paragraph three (3) of Plaintiff's Complaint, Defendant  
13 denies the allegations in this paragraph.

#### 14 JURISDICTION AND VENUE

15 4. In Answer to Paragraph four (4) of Plaintiff's Complaint, Defendant  
16 admits that this court has jurisdiction over the subject matter of this action pursuant  
17 to 28 U.S.C. § 1332.

18 5. In Answer to Paragraph five (5) of Plaintiff's Complaint, Defendant  
19 admits that he is a resident and citizen of the State of Florida. Defendant neither  
20 admits nor denies the remaining allegations contained herein, for the reason that the  
21 Defendant lacks sufficient information and knowledge in which to form a belief as  
22 to the truth of the allegations.

23 6. In Answer to Paragraph six (6) of Plaintiff's Complaint, Defendant  
24 denies the allegations contained therein.

25 7. In Answer to Paragraph seven (7) of Plaintiff's Complaint, Defendant  
26 neither admits nor denies the allegations contained herein, for the reason that the  
27 Defendant lacks sufficient information and knowledge in which to form a belief as  
28 to the truth of the allegations therein.

8. In Answer to Paragraph eight (8) of Plaintiff's Complaint, Defendant vehemently denies that he acted illegally and denies that he has subjected himself to jurisdiction in the State of California. Moreover, the Defendant vehemently denies Plaintiff suffers from damages attributable to Defendant. If Plaintiff suffers and continues to suffer damages as alleged by Plaintiff, then those alleged damages are a direct result of Plaintiff's actions and conduct in this world. As to the balance of the allegations in this paragraph, Defendant neither admits nor denies the allegations contained herein, for the reason that the Defendant lacks sufficient information and knowledge in which to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations therein and leaves Plaintiff to its proofs.

## PARTIES

9. In Answer to Paragraph nine (9) of Plaintiff's Complaint, Defendant neither admits nor denies the allegations contained herein, for the reason that the Defendant lacks sufficient information and knowledge in which to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations therein.

10. In Answer to Paragraph ten (10) of Plaintiff's Complaint, Defendant admits that he is a resident of the State of Florida only and that he was the chief executive officer of Overstock.com until August of 2019. Furthermore, Defendant admits that he was interviewed by Capitol Times Magazine in 2023. Furthermore, as to the balance of the allegations in this paragraph, Defendant neither admits nor denies the allegations contained herein, for the reason that the Defendant lacks sufficient information and knowledge in which to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations therein.

11. In Answer to Paragraph eleven (11) of Plaintiff's Complaint, Defendant denies that he is a "serial liar". As to the balance of this paragraph, Defendant neither admits nor denies the allegations contained herein, for the reason that the Defendant lacks sufficient information and knowledge in which to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations therein.

1           12. In Answer to Paragraph twelve (12) of Plaintiff's Complaint,  
2 Defendant neither admits nor denies the allegations contained herein, for the reason  
3 that the Defendant lacks sufficient information and knowledge in which to form a  
4 belief as to the truth of the allegations therein.

5           13. In Answer to Paragraph thirteen (13) of Plaintiff's Complaint,  
6 Defendant admits that he has currently more than 300,000 followers on his social  
7 media platform. As to the balance of this paragraph, Defendant neither admits nor  
8 denies the allegations contained herein, for the reason that the Defendant lacks  
9 sufficient information and knowledge in which to form a belief as to the truth of the  
10 allegations therein.

11           14. In Answer to Paragraph fourteen (14) of Plaintiff's Complaint,  
12 Defendant neither admits nor denies the allegations contained herein, for the reason  
13 that the Defendant lacks sufficient information and knowledge in which to form a  
14 belief as to the truth of the allegations therein.

15           15. In Answer to Paragraph fifteen (15) of Plaintiff's Complaint,  
16 Defendant neither admits nor denies the allegations contained herein, for the reason  
17 that the Defendant lacks sufficient information and knowledge in which to form a  
18 belief as to the truth of the allegations therein.

19           16. In Answer to Paragraph sixteen (16) of Plaintiff's Complaint,  
20 Defendant neither admits nor denies the allegations contained herein, for the reason  
21 that the Defendant lacks sufficient information and knowledge in which to form a  
22 belief as to the truth of the allegations therein.

23           17. In Answer to Paragraph seventeen (17) of Plaintiff's Complaint,  
24 Defendant denies that he has made defamatory statements about Plaintiff. As to the  
25 balance of this paragraph, Defendant neither admits nor denies the allegations  
26 contained herein, for the reason that the Defendant lacks sufficient information and  
27 knowledge in which to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations therein.  
28



1       18. In Answer to Paragraph eighteen (18) of Plaintiff's Complaint,  
2 Defendant admits that he appeared in an interview in Capitol Times Magazine and  
3 denies the rest of the allegations contained therein for the reason the same are  
4 untrue.

5       19. In Answer to Paragraph nineteen (19) of Plaintiff's Complaint,  
6 Defendant admits only that he appeared in an interview in Capitol Times Magazine,  
7 the contents of which speak for themselves. As to the balance of this paragraph,  
8 Defendant neither admits nor denies the allegations contained herein, for the reason  
9 that the Defendant lacks sufficient information and knowledge in which to form a  
10 belief as to the truth of the allegations therein.

11       20. In Answer to Paragraph twenty (20) of Plaintiff's Complaint,  
12 Defendant admits only that he appeared in an interview in Capitol Times Magazine,  
13 the contents of which speak for themselves. As to the balance of the allegations,  
14 Defendant neither admits nor denies the allegations contained herein, for the reason  
15 that the Defendant lacks sufficient information and knowledge in which to form a  
16 belief as to the truth of the allegations therein.

17       21. In Answer to Paragraph twenty-one (21) of Plaintiff's Complaint,  
18 Defendant admits only that he appeared in an interview in Capitol Times Magazine,  
19 the contents of which speak for themselves. Defendant denies that he made any  
20 false and/or defamatory statements as stated herein by Plaintiff.

21       22. In Answer to Paragraph twenty-two (22) of Plaintiff's Complaint,  
22 Defendant admits only that he appeared in an interview in Capitol Times Magazine,  
23 the contents of which speak for themselves. Defendant denies that he made any  
24 intentional false statements about Plaintiff as stated herein. As to the balance of this  
25 paragraph, Defendant neither admits nor denies the allegations contained herein, for  
26 the reason that the Defendant lacks sufficient information and knowledge in which  
27 to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations therein.  
28

1       23. In Answer to Paragraph twenty-three (23) of Plaintiff's Complaint,  
2 Defendant admits only that he appeared for an interview with Emerald Robinson on  
3 "The Absolute Truth," the contents of which speak for themselves. Defendant  
4 denies that he has made any defamatory statements or false accusations against  
5 Plaintiff. As to the balance of this paragraph, Defendant neither admits nor denies  
6 the allegations contained herein, for the reason that the Defendant lacks sufficient  
7 information and knowledge in which to form a belief as to the truth of the  
8 allegations therein.

9       24. In Answer to Paragraph twenty-four (24) of Plaintiff's Complaint,  
10 Defendant admits only that he appeared for a follow-up interview with Emerald  
11 Robinson on "The Absolute Truth," the contents of which speak for themselves.  
12 Defendant denies he made any defamatory charges as alleged by Plaintiff in this  
13 paragraph. As to the balance of this paragraph, Defendant neither admits nor denies  
14 the allegations contained herein, for the reason that the Defendant lacks sufficient  
15 information and knowledge in which to form a belief as to the truth of the  
16 allegations therein.

17       25. In Answer to Paragraph twenty-five (25) of Plaintiff's Complaint,  
18 Defendant admits that he appeared in an interview in Capitol Times Magazine, the  
19 contents of which speak for themselves. Defendant admits that he appeared on The  
20 Alex Jones Show in July of 2023, the contents of which speak for themselves. As to  
21 the balance of this paragraph, Defendant neither admits nor denies the allegations  
22 contained herein, for the reason that the Defendant lacks sufficient information and  
23 knowledge in which to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations therein.

24       26. In Answer to Paragraph twenty-six (26) of Plaintiff's Complaint,  
25 Defendant denies the allegations contained therein.

26       27. In Answer to Paragraph twenty-seven (27) of Plaintiff's Complaint,  
27 Defendant neither admits nor denies that he posted statements on social media  
28 concerning Plaintiff. Defendant denies he has made any false and defamatory

1 statements about Plaintiff. To the extent that the remaining allegations in this  
2 paragraph contain mixed statements of fact and assertions of law, Defendant neither  
3 admits nor denies the allegations.

4 28. In Answer to Paragraph twenty-eight (28) of Plaintiff's Complaint,  
5 Defendant denies the allegations contained therein. As to the balance of the  
6 allegations in this paragraph that contain mixed statements of fact and assertions of  
7 law, Defendant neither admits nor denies the allegations.

8 29. In Answer to Paragraph twenty-nine (29) of Plaintiff's Complaint,  
9 Defendant denies the allegations contained therein.

10 30. In Answer to Paragraph thirty (30) of Plaintiff's Complaint, Defendant  
11 neither admits nor denies the allegations contained herein, for the reason that the  
12 Defendant lacks sufficient information and knowledge in which to form a belief as  
13 to the truth of the allegations therein.

14 31. In Answer to Paragraph thirty-one (31) of Plaintiff's Complaint,  
15 Defendant neither admits nor denies the allegations contained herein, for the reason  
16 that the Defendant lacks sufficient information and knowledge in which to form a  
17 belief as to the truth of the allegations therein.

18 **FIRST CLAIM FOR RELIEF**

19 **(Defamation)**

20 **(Against Defendant Byrne)**

21 32. Defendant incorporates by reference paragraphs 1–31 above, as it set  
22 forth fully herein word for word.

23 33. In Answer to Paragraph thirty-three (33) of Plaintiff's Complaint,  
24 Defendant denies the allegations contained therein and that he has not made any  
25 false statements about Plaintiff. Defendant admits that he appeared in an interview  
26 in Capitol Times Magazine and neither admits nor denies that he posted statements  
27 on social media, and that such statements speak for themselves. As to the remaining  
28



1 allegations in this paragraph that contain mixed statements of fact and assertions of  
2 law, Defendant neither admits nor denies the allegations contained therein.

3 34. In Answer to Paragraph thirty-four (34) of Plaintiff's Complaint,  
4 Defendant denies that he has made any defamatory about Plaintiff. As to the  
5 remaining allegations in this paragraph that contain mixed statements of fact and  
6 assertions of law, Defendant neither admits nor denies the allegations.

7 35. In Answer to Paragraph thirty-five (35) of Plaintiff's Complaint,  
8 Defendant denies the allegations that he made any false statements about Plaintiff.  
9 As to the balance of this paragraph that contain mixed statements of fact and  
10 assertions of law, Defendant neither admits nor denies the allegations.

11 36. In Answer to Paragraph thirty-six (36) of Plaintiff's Complaint,  
12 Defendant neither admits nor denies the allegations contained herein, for the reason  
13 that the Defendant lacks sufficient information and knowledge in which to form a  
14 belief as to the truth of the allegations therein and leaves Plaintiff to its proofs.

15 37. In Answer to Paragraph thirty-seven (37) of Plaintiff's Complaint,  
16 Defendant neither admits nor denies the allegations contained herein, for the reason  
17 that the Defendant lacks sufficient information and knowledge in which to form a  
18 belief as to the truth of the allegations therein.

19 38. In Answer to Paragraph thirty-eight (38) of Plaintiff's Complaint,  
20 Defendant denies that he has made defamatory statements about Plaintiff. As to the  
21 balance of the allegations herein, Defendant neither admits nor denies the  
22 allegations contained herein, for the reason that the Defendant lacks sufficient  
23 information and knowledge in which to form a belief as to the truth of the  
24 allegations therein.

25 39. In Answer to Paragraph thirty-nine (39) of Plaintiff's Complaint,  
26 Defendant denies that he has made false statements about Plaintiff. As to the  
27 balance of the allegations herein, Defendant neither admits nor denies the  
28 allegations contained herein, for the reason that the Defendant lacks sufficient

1 information and knowledge in which to form a belief as to the truth of the  
2 allegations therein.

3 40. In Answer to Paragraph forty (40) of Plaintiff's Complaint, Defendant  
4 denies that he has made false claims as stated in this paragraph. As to the balance of  
5 the allegations in this paragraph that contain mixed statements of fact and assertions  
6 of law, Defendant neither admits nor denies the allegations.

7 41. In Answer to Paragraph forty-one (41) of Plaintiff's Complaint,  
8 Defendant denies that he has made false accusations. As to the balance of the  
9 allegations in this paragraph that contain mixed statements of fact and assertions of  
10 law, Defendant neither admits nor denies the allegations.

11 42. In Answer to Paragraph forty-two (42) of Plaintiff's Complaint,  
12 Defendant denies that he has made false claims as stated in this paragraph. As to the  
13 balance of the allegations in this paragraph that contain mixed statements of fact  
14 and assertions of law, Defendant neither admits nor denies the allegations.

15 43. In Answer to Paragraph forty-three (43) of Plaintiff's Complaint,  
16 Defendant denies that he has made false statements as stated in this paragraph. As  
17 to the balance of the allegations in this paragraph that contain mixed statements of  
18 fact and assertions of law, Defendant neither admits nor denies the allegations.

19 44. In Answer to Paragraph forty-four (44) of Plaintiff's Complaint,  
20 Defendant denies that he has made false accusations as stated in this paragraph. As  
21 to the balance of the allegations in this paragraph that contain mixed statements of  
22 fact and assertions of law, Defendant neither admits nor denies the allegations.

23 45. In Answer to Paragraph forty-five (45) of Plaintiff's Complaint,  
24 Defendant denies that he acted wrongfully as stated herein. Moreover, the  
25 Defendant denies Plaintiff suffers from damages attributable to Defendant.

26 46. In Answer to Paragraph forty-six (46) of Plaintiff's Complaint,  
27 Defendant denies the allegations contained therein.  
28

47. In Answer to Paragraph forty-seven (47) of Plaintiff's Complaint, Defendant denies the allegations contained therein.

WHEREFORE, Defendant respectfully requests that Plaintiff's complaint for damages for defamation be dismissed with prejudice and without recovery of any kind and that Defendant be awarded such additional equitable and legal relief as is appropriate including but not limited to costs and reasonable attorney fees so wrongfully suffered.

## **AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSES**

Defendant, Patrick M. Byrne, by his Attorneys, incorporates by reference his answer to Plaintiff's Complaint for Damages for Defamation and states unto this Honorable Court the following as his Affirmative Defenses:

**FIRST AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSE: PLAINTIFF IS A PUBLIC FIGURE**

Plaintiff, as a public figure, assumed the risk associated with his behavior and conduct, and that he would subject himself to scrutiny and criticism in the public forum.

## SECOND AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSE: TRUTH

The alleged defamatory statements made by Defendant are true and thus serve as an absolute defense to defamation and are protected speech.

### THIRD AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSE: 1ST AMENDMENT

Defendant has the right to petition and of free speech under the constitutions of the United States and the State of California, and this fundamental right serves as an affirmative defense to Plaintiff's allegations and claims.

#### FOURTH AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSE: GOOD FAITH/NO MALICE

At all times, Defendant acted in good faith and without malice.

## FIFTH AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSE: FAILURE TO STATE A CLAIM

**Plaintiff has failed to state a claim and/or cause of action.**

## SIXTH AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSE: UNCLEAN HANDS



1 Plaintiff's claims are barred in whole or in part by his unclean hands.

2 **SEVENTH AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSE: FAILURE TO MITIGATE**

3 Plaintiff has failed to mitigate his alleged damages.

6 **EIGHTH AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSE: CLAIM IS TIME BARRED**

7 Plaintiff's claims are barred by the applicable Statute of Limitations and/or  
8 the Doctrine of Latches.

9 **ADDITIONAL AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSES**

10 Defendant reserves the right to add additional defenses as they become  
11 known through discovery up until the time of trial.

13 WHEREFORE, Defendant prays as follows:

- 14 1. That Plaintiff take nothing by reason of its complaint, that judgement be  
15 rendered in favor of Defendant;  
16 2. That Defendant be awarded his costs of suit incurred in defense of this  
17 action, including his reasonable attorneys' fees; and  
18 3. For such other relief as the Court deems proper.

21 Dated: February 14, 2024 By: /s/ Michael J. Smith

22 Michael J. Smith

23 Attorney for Defendant  
24 PATRICK M. BYRNE

# Exhibit C

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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

ROBERT HUNTER BIDEN, an	)	
individual,	)	
	)	
Plaintiff,	)	Certified Copy
	)	
vs.	)	CASE NO.:
	)	2:23-cv-09430-SVW-PD
PATRICK M. BYRNE, an	)	
individual,	)	
	)	
Defendants.	)	
_____	)	

Confidential Subject to Protective Order

CONFIDENTIAL REMOTE VIDEOCONFERENCE DEPOSITION  
OF ROBERT HUNTER BIDEN

DATE:	Friday, August 16, 2024
TIME:	9:35 a.m. to 3:02 p.m.
REMOTE LOCATION:	Malibu, California

STENOGRAPHICALLY REPORTED BY:  
Grace M. Thompson, CSR No. 8194



1 The Remote Videoconference Deposition of ROBERT HUNTER  
2 BIDEN, taken on behalf of the Defendant, before Grace M.  
3 Thompson, a Certified Shorthand Reporter, commencing at the  
4 hour of 9:35 a.m. on Friday, August 16, 2024, remotely at  
5 Malibu, California.

6 V I D E O C O N F E R E N C E A P P E A R A N C E S

7 For Plaintiff:

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12 ~ AND ~

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17  
18 For Defendant:

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(818) 558-3718  
22 E-mail: Michael@MurphLaw.net

23 The Videographer: ROBERT MAC TAVISH

24  
25 Also Present: PATRICK BYRNE

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I N D E X

PAGE

Deposition of ROBERT HUNTER BIDEN

Examination by Mr. Murphy 9

E X H I B I T S

Exhibit 600 Defendant Patrick Byrne's  
Notice of Taking of Deposition  
of Plaintiff Robert Hunter  
Biden; 4 page 16

Exhibit 601 Plaintiff's Objections to  
Defendant's Amended Notice of  
Deposition of Plaintiff Robert  
Hunter Biden; 4 pages 17

Exhibit 602 Plaintiff Robert Hunter  
Biden's Rule 26 Supplemental  
Disclosures; 4 pages 17

Exhibit 603 Plaintiff Robert Hunter Biden's  
Responses to Defendant Patrick  
M. Byrne's First Set of  
Interrogatories; 15 pages 18

Exhibit 604 Stipulation for Protective  
Order and Order; 18 pages 20

Exhibit 605 Complaint for Damages for  
Defamation; 38 pages 21

Exhibit 606 Affidavit dated April 1, 2024;  
3 pages 43

Exhibit 607 Letter dated October 26, 2023,  
to Patrick Byrne from Abbe  
David Lowell; 3 pages 64

Exhibit 608 Document beginning with Bates  
stamp No. RHB00101; 6 pages 110

1	EXHIBITS CONTINUED:		
2	Exhibit 609	File entitled "Press Kit"; 23 pages	113
3			
4	Exhibit 610	File entitled "Press"; 28 pages	118
5	Exhibit 611	File entitled "Podcasts"; 10 pages	122
6	Exhibit 612	File entitled "International Press"; 18 pages	123
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8	Exhibit 620	U.S. Senate Committee on Finance Majority Staff Report; 87 pages	125
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10	Exhibit 621	The Government's Motions In Limine; 71 pages	129
11	Exhibit 622	New York Post article entitled Smoking-gun email reveals how Hunter Biden introduced Ukrainian businessman to VP dad; 13 pages	132
12			
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14	Exhibit 623	Independent article entitled Not many people are buying Hunter Biden's new book; 9 pages	134
15			
16	Exhibit 624	New York Post article entitled Hunter Biden's drug- and sex-fueled memoir is a big fat flop; 11 pages	135
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19	Exhibit 625	Screenshot of an Amazon page for the book Laptop from Hell: Hunter Biden, Big Tech, and the Dirty Secrets the President Tried to Hide; 8 pages	136
20			
21			
22	Exhibit 626	National Security article entitled Analysis of Hunter Biden's hard drive show he, his firm took in about \$11 million from 2013 to 2018, spent it fast; 9 pages	137
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25			



1	EXHIBITS CONTINUED:		
2	Exhibit 627	Article entitled The Sordid Saga of Hunter Biden's Laptop;	
3		30 pages	140
4	Exhibit 628	Article entitled Republican Claims About Hunter Biden	
5		Offenses; 5 pages	142
6	Exhibit 629	The Irish Times article entitled Hunter Biden, the	
7		'big guy' and whether	
8		allegations of corruption represent a scandal or a	
9		smear; 27 pages	143
10	Exhibit 630	CBC News article entitled The scandals swirling around	
11		Hunter Biden - what we know, what we don't, and what's next;	
12		14 pages	143
13	Exhibit 631	Press Release entitled Comer, Greene Renew Request to DOJ on	
14		Mishandling of Hunter Biden Victims' Rights; 4 pages	149
15	Exhibit 632	Article entitled Hunter Biden's universe of legal problems,	
16		briefly explained; 14 pages	149
17	Exhibit 633	Indictment for Case No. 23-00061-MN; 4 pages	150
18	Exhibit 634	New York Post article entitled Biden has a secret, illegal	
19		deal with Iran that gives	
20		mullahs everything they want;	
21		2 pages	150
22	Exhibit 635	Fox News article entitled Hunter Biden took thousands	
23		from daughter's college fund for 'hookers and drugs':	
24		report; 12 pages	151
25	Exhibit 638	Indictment for Case No. 2:23-cr-00599-MCS; 56 pages	151

EXHIBITS CONTINUED:

Exhibit 639	National Review article entitled The Indefensible, Shameless, Sordid Hunter Biden; 9 pages	153
Exhibit 640	CNN Politics article entitled Hunter Biden's universe of legal problems, briefly explained; 11 pages	153
Exhibit 641	The New York Times article entitled A Timeline of Hunter Biden's Life and Legal Troubles; 11 pages	154
Exhibit 653	Marco Polo file BidenLaptopMedia.com; 12 pages	154
Exhibit 654	Marco Polo Report on the Biden Laptop; 3 pages	159

INFORMATION REQUESTED

(None)

QUESTIONS REFUSED TO ANSWER

(Page 152, Line 3)

1 oral statements that Mr. Byrne has made where he has shown  
2 in those oral statements any actual ill will directed  
3 towards you?

4 A. Explain the question again.

5 Q. Yeah, I'll do it very carefully.

6 Prior to May of 2023, are you able to identify any  
7 oral statements that Mr. Byrne has made specifically about  
8 you that demonstrates he had any actual ill will towards  
9 you?

10 MR. LOWELL: You're saying oral statements to  
11 anybody, like Patrick Byrne talking to his wife?

12 MR. MURPHY: It could be Byrne talking to anybody.

13 THE WITNESS: I don't know of any -- I don't know  
14 what Mr. Byrne was saying to anyone privately or -- before  
15 May of 2023. I believe that he began talking about this in  
16 references all the way back to 2021.

17 BY MR. MURPHY:

18 Q. Okay. And I'm just talking about prior to May of  
19 2023, are you aware of any statements that Mr. Byrne made  
20 about you that demonstrated an ill will towards you? And  
21 it could be from any source.

22 A. Uh --

23 Q. And this date is prior to the publication of the  
24 statements that are the subject of your action.

25 A. I don't know how to fully answer that question. I



1 know that -- because I can't date it exactly when I --

2 Q. Don't guess. Don't guess. If you don't know, you  
3 don't know. If you have an estimate of some kind, then  
4 that's fine.

5 A. Okay. I don't have any guesses or estimates that  
6 I could make of the first -- before May of 2023 what  
7 Mr. Byrne was saying about me publicly or privately.

8 Q. Prior to May of 2023, are you able to identify any  
9 writings where Mr. Byrne demonstrated personal ill will  
10 towards you?

11 MR. LOWELL: Well, subject to our discovery  
12 attempts that we are still working on with you and others,  
13 you're asking Mr. Biden for his own memory of what  
14 Mr. Byrne said prior or wrote prior to May of '23; is that  
15 right?

16 MR. MURPHY: Yeah.

17 MR. LOWELL: With that understanding --

18 MR. MURPHY: I want to know what he knows.

19 MR. LOWELL: So generally if he has an  
20 understanding or a belief that Mr. Byrne has been making  
21 statements about him but doesn't have a specific date and  
22 time, do you want him to say that?

23 MR. MURPHY: No.

24 BY MR. MURPHY:

25 Q. I asked for prior to May of 2023, are you able to

1 identify any writings that Mr. Byrne prepared and published  
2 where he showed actual ill will towards you.

3 A. Well, because -- let me -- I don't -- I don't have  
4 in front of me any statements that Mr. Byrne may have made  
5 prior to May of 2023. I believe, however, I am estimating  
6 that Mr. Byrne began this kind of conspiracy campaign in  
7 2021, but I don't have that in front of me. That's my --  
8 that's my best answer that I can give. I hope that works  
9 for you.

10 Q. And do you believe that Mr. Byrne put something in  
11 writing that was published prior to May of 2023 exhibiting  
12 ill will towards you?

13 A. Towards my family definitely.

14 Q. I --

15 A. Towards me specifically -- well, I'm answering the  
16 question the best I can, Mr. Murphy. And so is that  
17 towards me specifically I don't -- I don't have that in  
18 front of me, no.

19 Q. Okay, thank you. What I'd like to do is go back  
20 to your Complaint which is Exhibit 605. And attached to  
21 it is an Exhibit A. And I'll tell you what page I want  
22 you to go to to make it simple and then the videographer  
23 can bring that up, too. I'd like you to go to page 27 of  
24 the Complaint which has as page 9 of 10 of Exhibit A. And  
25 for purposes of also identifying it, the band on it will

1 say Volume 01, Capitol Times Magazine, Issue 01, page 72.

2 But for the videographer, go to page 27 of the  
3 document. Next page. Keep going. Yeah, keep going.

4 And this is the page that I'm interested in. And  
5 in your Complaint you allege I believe and I want to  
6 confirm you're alleging that the statements that Mr. Byrne  
7 made on the right column of this article at page 72 from  
8 top to bottom and on page 73 top to bottom are the  
9 statements that formulate the basis of your claim for  
10 defamation against him.

11 MR. LOWELL: First, I think that the Complaint  
12 sets out which of the statements are actionable. I know  
13 this an attachment. I don't know that this attachment  
14 covers all, but looking at page 72 and 73, Mr. Biden can  
15 certainly confirm that this is among what's in the  
16 Complaint.

17 MR. MURPHY: Counsel, I don't want you coaching  
18 him. I will ask my questions. If he doesn't understand  
19 them, he will tell me he doesn't understand them. It's  
20 inappropriate for you to coach him during a deposition.

21 MR. LOWELL: I wasn't coaching. So let me make  
22 this clear. I object to the form of your question.

23 MR. MURPHY: Great, that's what you can do --

24 MR. LOWELL: And if he can answer it the way you  
25 asked, then he may.



1 Q. Yeah, I think -- I'm not asking for your opinion  
2 about what you think of the article whether it's true or  
3 not --

4 A. No, I wasn't -- sorry.

5 Q. Please let me finish because I'm trying to help.  
6 I didn't ask that question so I'm trying to clarify.

7 A. I apologize, apologize.

8 Q. That's okay, that's okay. We're doing pretty good  
9 so far.

10 What I'm interested in knowing is do you have any  
11 personal knowledge where you know that Mr. Byrne knew,  
12 Mr. Byrne knew, at the time he published this article and  
13 the subsequent statements concerning this article and  
14 passages from this article that the state -- that he knew  
15 it was false, that he knew it was false?

16 MR. LOWELL: You're asking Mr. Biden the basis of  
17 what Mr. Byrne's belief was?

18 MR. MURPHY: Yes.

19 THE WITNESS: Okay. I guess I'm not qualified to  
20 know what Mr. Byrne -- and I really do and I'm not trying  
21 to be difficult.

22 BY MR. MURPHY:

23 Q. No, that's a good answer, that's fine.

24 A. I guess -- and I don't -- and this isn't an  
25 aspersion, but what -- you're asking me if Mr. Byrne knew

1 that he was lying, and I can't be the one to tell you  
2 whether or not Mr. Byrne is lying, whether he is mentally  
3 unstable, or whether he has a -- has an intent behind this  
4 that is much more nefarious than even I can consider which  
5 is collusion with other entities or political entities or  
6 foreign entities. I don't know. I don't know if this is  
7 something that came from Ms. Butina, I don't know if it  
8 came from the Russians, I don't know, but all I do know is  
9 that it is an obvious and easily provable lie.

10 Q. Okay. Let me ask you this: Do you have any  
11 personal knowledge whether or not Mr. Byrne entertained  
12 any serious reservations about the truth of the statements  
13 in this article and the subsequent variations of the  
14 publication of it at the time he made those publications?

15 A. Did he have any reservations?

16 Q. Serious doubts about whether or not the items  
17 that are published in this article and his subsequent  
18 statements about it were false. Did he have reservations  
19 about it?

20 A. Mr. Murphy, you're asking me to ask whether or not  
21 some -- to get in someone else's mind. I don't know  
22 whether Mr. Byrne had any reservations about it, and I  
23 don't -- I guess that, you know, that's something for his  
24 deposition, not mine.

25 Q. Okay.

1           A. I do know this: That clearly he overcame his  
2       reservations about whether or not he should lie about me  
3       and he went on to -- and continues to this day, so I guess  
4       he didn't have much reservation, huh?

5           Q. Do you know if -- you know, the article up here at  
6       the top says in November of 2021 that Mr. Byrne traveled to  
7       the Middle East. Do you know if in November of 2021  
8       Mr. Byrne traveled to the Middle East?

9           A. I only know what Mr. Byrne asserts in this article  
10      and what he's asserted and continues to assert publicly  
11      through writings and through social media and through  
12      interviews that he's done on podcasts and other media  
13      platforms.

14          Q. So you don't have any personal knowledge about  
15      whether or not Mr. Byrne traveled to the Middle East in  
16      November of 2021, correct?

17          A. That's correct.

18          Q. Okay. And do you have any personal knowledge of  
19      when Mr. Byrne traveled to the Middle East in 2021 that he  
20      met with an Iranian figure including other people that he  
21      knew from Iran?

22               MR. LOWELL: Objection to the form. Did you just  
23      assume that he went to the Middle East or is it you're  
24      asking if he went to the Middle East?

25               MR. MURPHY: I asked him -- why don't you read



1 A. Okay, and nothing else. Like I say, are you  
2 asking me whether I think Mr. Byrne lied about that also?

3 Q. No. Do you have any personal knowledge of whether  
4 or not he did that?

5 A. I did not see Mr. --

6 MR. LOWELL: Objection.

7 THE WITNESS: Oh, go ahead.

8 BY MR. MURPHY:

9 Q. Let me do this: I'm not asking for an opinion.  
10 I'm asking for whether or not you have any personal  
11 knowledge he did that. I'm not asking for an opinion.

12 A. Understood. I did not see Mr. Byrne board a plane  
13 or deplane in the locations that he says that he did.

14 Q. And do you have any personal knowledge of when  
15 Mr. Byrne claims he was in the Middle East in November  
16 of '21, that he met with an Iranian figure and other people  
17 from Iran?

18 A. I did not witness nor would have had occasion to  
19 witness Mr. Byrne meeting with anyone in anywhere, Iran or  
20 anywhere else. I've never met Mr. Byrne.

21 Q. Okay.

22 Mr. Videographer, can you move this document up a  
23 little bit?

24 Do you have any personal knowledge of whether or  
25 not when Mr. Byrne was in Iran that they made statements to

1 him in here about ongoing negotiations? And I'm trying to  
2 paraphrase. We can read the text of what he claims he was  
3 told that's contained here in the second paragraph of the  
4 article. Let's just look at that text.

5 Do you have any personal knowledge of whether or  
6 not when Mr. Byrne claims he was in Iran that the Iranian  
7 figure and these other Iranian people made these statements  
8 to Mr. Byrne that he claims they made to him in the second  
9 paragraph on column two of this article?

10 A. Mr. Byrne -- I guess we can cut this short a  
11 little bit and just say that I have never seen Mr. Byrne  
12 get on a plane or in any location personally physically  
13 that I'm aware of ever. So I can't attest to whether or  
14 not he actually had the meetings that he said he had. All  
15 I know is that as it pertains to me, they are really awful  
16 lies.

17 Q. All right. Okay.

18 And then if we go -- videographer, can you move  
19 the document up again?

20 And then on the last paragraph at column two it  
21 mentions something about Minister of Defense of Pakistan  
22 and him getting voice recordings of him confirming  
23 discussions he had with the Iranians pertaining to  
24 negotiating a deal for the release of Iranian funds I  
25 guess. Do you know if, in fact, Mr. Byrne obtained the

1 voicemail recordings of those phone calls when he was there  
2 in the Middle East?

3 A. I do not.

4 MR. LOWELL: Did you ask those of your client?

5 BY MR. MURPHY:

6 Q. And do you know the Minister of Defense of  
7 Pakistan? Have you ever met him?

8 A. Not that I'm aware of.

9 Q. Okay. Have you ever played golf with the Minister  
10 of Defense of Pakistan?

11 A. No.

12 Q. Okay. Let's go over to the next page of this  
13 article. And in here Mr. Byrne claims he turned the tapes  
14 in to have them authenticated. Do you know if Mr. Byrne,  
15 in fact -- do you have any personal knowledge if Mr. Byrne  
16 took any voicemail tapes to the U.S. government to have  
17 them authenticated and reviewed?

18 A. What I don't understand here and so if you could  
19 clarify, is Mr. Byrne claiming that there is a voicemail  
20 that I left, that he left, that this son of a Minister of  
21 the Defense or former Pakistan -- what -- whose voicemail  
22 are we talking about that Mr. Byrne is -- is saying that he  
23 has? Do you have that voicemail?

24 Q. Let me show you something. And, yes, we have  
25 some voicemails and we're turning them over as soon as the



1 you know, you're answering your questions and not mine. I  
2 would like mine answered.

3 A. Okay.

4 Q. So we can get this deposition done today.

5 A. Oh, we'll get it done today, Mr. Murphy, I promise  
6 you.

7 Q. Let me finish.

8 A. Yeah, yeah.

9 Q. On this top paragraph on the left it mentions that  
10 he turned in a tape to the government to verify who was on  
11 the tape. What I'm asking you is do you have any personal  
12 knowledge whether Mr. Byrne actually did what he wrote in  
13 this article. That's all I'm asking you.

14 A. Whether or not I know Mr. Byrne actually did the  
15 things that he says that he did in this article, no, I  
16 don't have any --

17 Q. No, that isn't what I asked you. I asked you  
18 about the tape. We're on page 73.

19 A. Okay. I'm going to read -- I'm going to read it  
20 just for the purpose of it.

21 "When I returned, the agencies went to work over  
22 the weekend. I was told a week later that they confirmed  
23 it all. The voice on the voicemail that I had acquired was  
24 voice-matched to the son of the Minister of Defense of  
25 Pakistan, who had a connection to Hunter Biden. Anyway, in

1 December, 2021 I was told the scheme was confirmed across  
2 the agencies."

3 Now, if you're -- what are you asking me about  
4 that statement? I can tell you this, is that there's --  
5 number one, I don't know what the hell he's talking about.  
6 Number two is that I don't know is he talking about -- I  
7 don't know what he's talking about, so how can I answer  
8 that?

9 Q. Fine. If you can't answer the question, then just  
10 say that. That's all you have to do. It's fine.

11 A. Mr. Murphy, it's not --

12 Q. Let me ask you --

13 A. -- all I have to do.

14 Q. Let me -- let me -- I don't want to argue with  
15 you.

16 Let me ask you this: Do you know -- do you have  
17 any personal knowledge that Mr. Byrne turned over any  
18 tapes to the government that he received on his trip from  
19 Iran, that he claims he received on his trip from Iran  
20 to --

21 A. I have no personal knowledge.

22 Q. I didn't finish my question.

23 A. Sorry.

24 Q. All right. Let me finish my question.

25 A. Sure.

1 Q. Hang on one second.

2 I'm in a deposition.

3 There, that takes care of them. A lot of people  
4 like to cover me and interrupt.

5 What I want to know as a follow-up question is do  
6 you have any personal knowledge of whether or not Mr. Byrne  
7 turned over any tapes to the government that he claims he  
8 received from Iran that relate to these voicemails that are  
9 referenced in this article?

10 A. I do not.

11 MR. MURPHY: Okay. I'd now like to mark for  
12 identification as Exhibit No. 606, a document entitled  
13 "Affidavit."

14 (Exhibit 606 was marked for identification)

15 BY MR. MURPHY:

16 Q. Have you had an opportunity to review this  
17 document prior to today?

18 A. I believe so. Can I confer with my attorney? Is  
19 this -- because I'm just looking at it on a screen. I  
20 believe this is --

21 Q. Yeah, why don't we do this: Let's take a  
22 five-minute break and we'll take our first break of the  
23 depo. We're almost at an hour. And, yeah, you can do  
24 that. Do me a favor. Don't log off, just mute, and if you  
25 want to shut off your video recorder, do that.



1 Q. Okay. And do you know if any of the broadcast  
2 networks ever published any of the statements that  
3 Mr. Byrne made in his publication on -- of June of 2023?

4 A. I don't have anything in front of me to answer  
5 that question, no.

6 Q. Do you know how many copies of the Capitol Times  
7 Magazine with the article that had the statements in it  
8 were distributed?

9 A. Physical copy, Mr. Murphy?

10 Q. Yes.

11 A. I don't know. It is a -- it's a physical  
12 magazine?

13 Q. Yes, it's a physical magazine and an Internet  
14 magazine.

15 A. Oh, okay. Well, is it primarily distributed --

16 Q. I want to know what you know, not what I know. So  
17 what I'd like to know is -- and if you don't know, just  
18 say you don't know, it's okay. Do you know how many  
19 articles or how many copies of the Capitol Times Magazine  
20 that contained Mr. Byrne's statements were distributed to  
21 anybody?

22 A. If you're asking me physical copies, I do not have  
23 a -- I don't believe that we know how many physical copies  
24 were printed of what was also put online and continues to  
25 exist today in the -- which I -- I don't know.

1 Q. Okay. And independent of anything your lawyer  
2 told you, do you know if any demand for retraction was ever  
3 sent to Capitol Times? Do you know if that happened or  
4 not?

5 A. I do not know anything independent to my  
6 discussions with my attorney.

7 Q. When did you first become --  
8 Court Reporter, could you take down the exhibit,  
9 or videographer?

10 When did you actively become an artist?

11 A. I've been an artist my whole life. What do you  
12 mean by actively?

13 Q. Where you were starting to sell paintings and  
14 become involved in things of that nature.

15 A. Um --

16 Q. Where you were working with a gallery.

17 A. My -- I began working with a gallery in -- not in  
18 an official capacity, but I began a relationship with  
19 George Berges in the summer of 2019.

20 Q. Okay. And did you enter into a contract with him  
21 to produce and make paintings?

22 A. Eventually I entered a contract with him.

23 Q. Okay. And what were you required to do under that  
24 contract with him?

25 A. There was nothing -- what do you mean? What

1 requirement?

2 Q. You said you entered into a contract with him, so  
3 what were the terms of the contract?

4 A. The terms of the contract were is that basically  
5 it delineated the portion, the fee or the price of the  
6 painting that would go to the gallery for the support of my  
7 work and for exhibitions and -- and, you know, it's a  
8 standard artist/gallery contract.

9 Q. Okay. And in the contract was there a price that  
10 was to be set for each painting that you made that was to  
11 be sold?

12 A. No.

13 Q. And how was the price set for each painting that  
14 you were to make that was to be sold?

15 A. By the gallery in consultation -- by the gallery.

16 Q. I'm sorry, can you clarify that for me? I don't  
17 understand the answer.

18 A. Yes. The gallery set the prices.

19 Q. Okay. And how were those prices set?

20 A. You would have to ask Mr. Berges.

21 Q. And on whatever price was set for that painting,  
22 what percentage of the proceeds were you to receive?

23 A. After expenses and other things as it relates to  
24 material, shipping, exhibition cost, it usually works out  
25 to about 50 percent.

1 Q. Okay. So your fee for doing the paintings was to  
2 be 50 percent and the gallery got the other 50 and then  
3 they would pay the costs that they incurred out of their  
4 50 percent?

5 A. No. There's a standard contract which was the --  
6 I believe initially was 60/40. It went between 60/40 and  
7 50/50. We had I think -- I think we had two agreements,  
8 but basically 60/40, but I paid the expenses out of my side  
9 but it would be taken out of the proceeds from the -- from  
10 any sales.

11 Q. So on the split of the proceeds was that the net  
12 profits that you both made after expenses?

13 A. Was what the net profits? So if a painting sold  
14 for \$10 let's say --

15 Q. Right.

16 A. -- generally it has worked out to be that I would  
17 get close to 50 percent of that, so I would receive \$5.  
18 And of that \$5, whatever I was fronted for the cost of  
19 paint, the cost of my materials, the cost of canvases, the  
20 cost of transportation of those paintings to New York and  
21 so forth and so on, framing costs, would come out of my  
22 side.

23 Q. Okay. And then what would come out on the  
24 gallery's side? What expenses would they cover out of  
25 their portion?



1           A. The gallery's commission is purely for the space  
2 of the gallery, for the promotion that they would do,  
3 for -- for normal, you know, advancing of my career as an  
4 artist.

5           Q. Okay. And then from 2019 up to May of 2023, how  
6 many paintings did you actually sell?

7           A. I think that I -- I think about twenty -- or  
8 let's see, eleven, twelve, thirteen, about twenty-six  
9 paintings.

10          Q. Okay. That would be over the five-year period  
11 roughly from 2019 to May of 2023, four-year period?

12          A. No, it would be between -- I think the first  
13 painting that I sold was -- I can't remember exactly, but I  
14 think that in the -- in this winter of 2021 to May of 2023,  
15 that's about it, yeah.

16          Q. Okay. And did there ever come a time when you  
17 stopped making paintings and selling them?

18          A. Since the -- I think that I've sold one painting  
19 since the fall of 2023 or the spring of 2023, one or  
20 two paintings.

21          Q. Okay. And how many paintings did you sell in  
22 2023?

23          A. I don't have it in front of me, but I think I just  
24 gave a -- in 2023 I think I sold about one, two, three,  
25 four, fifteen, sixteen, about sixteen paintings. I think.

1 That's my best estimate, as you would say.

2 Q. Are --

3 A. But, yes, it's a good guesstimate, about  
4 sixteen paintings.

5 Q. I didn't mean to interrupt. Are you still selling  
6 paintings?

7 A. I'm trying to sell paintings. I haven't sold a  
8 painting for -- since -- I think I've sold two paintings  
9 since the middle of 2023.

10 Q. And what are you doing to actively make and sell  
11 paintings?

12 A. I still have a relationship with my gallery. I'm  
13 no longer under contract, but that's a normal kind of  
14 course for a -- for artists. And my gallery's website  
15 still advertises my paintings and I continue to paint on a  
16 daily basis.

17 Q. Were there any other galleries that you've done  
18 business with other than that initial one where you had had  
19 the contract?

20 A. No. Usually the way the galleries work is that  
21 you have an exclusive at least in -- regionally with one  
22 gallery.

23 Q. Okay. Previously I had asked you about if you  
24 knew the Defense Minister of Pakistan. Do you recall that?

25 A. Yes, I do.

1 Q. Do you know the son of the Defense Minister of  
2 Pakistan?

3 A. Not that I know of, no.

4 Q. Did you ever play golf with the son of the Defense  
5 Minister of Pakistan?

6 A. Not that I know of, no.

7 Q. Now, in 2021 you published your book Beautiful  
8 Things; is that correct?

9 A. I believe that was the date, yes, April of 2021.

10 Q. And how many copies of the book have sold from  
11 2021 to 2023?

12 A. Let's see.

13 MR. LOWELL: Just as an aside, has this been asked  
14 and answered in discovery interrogatories or document  
15 requests?

16 MR. MURPHY: No, and even if it was, it wouldn't  
17 matter. I have a right to do follow-up questions.

18 MR. LOWELL: No, you could. I'm just curious to  
19 make sure that we're not duplicating. You can ask  
20 whatever you want, more or less. I'm just curious, if  
21 that's --

22 MR. MURPHY: No, you did not give us any data.  
23 You just said that you lost book sales and we have no  
24 information, no documents on this issue.

25 THE WITNESS: Okay. Well, I do know this, is that

1 I don't know the exact number of books in front of me, but  
2 I'm certain that we could get that to you. We've been I  
3 think trying to reach out to get the exact number or  
4 whatever. But my point is is that I don't know the exact  
5 number of books that I've sold. I only know by revenue  
6 from the book.

7 And I know that the book made, you know,  
8 numerous bestseller lists including the New York Times.  
9 It was No. 4 on the bestseller list and I don't know  
10 what qualifies to be on the bestseller list, but it was  
11 on I think six or eight different bestseller lists,  
12 including, you know, I think it went to No. 7 or 6 in  
13 Germany in Der Spiegel and I think that it did very well  
14 in Scandinavia, and I also know that it did well in the  
15 U.S.

16 BY MR. MURPHY:

17 Q. Do you know if there was ever any articles  
18 published on the Internet in the U.S. declaring your book  
19 sales a flop?

20 A. No.

21 Q. Okay. Do you know if there was ever any articles  
22 published in the news media on the Internet that declared  
23 your artwork sales were a flop?

24 A. Not that I know of, but what do you -- would you  
25 clarify? What do you mean?



1 BY MR. MURPHY:

2 Q. Are you ready to proceed, Mr. Biden?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Okay. You're the son of President Biden, correct?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Okay. When your father was vice-president were  
7 there photographs of him and you and the family that were  
8 published on the Internet?

9 MR. LOWELL: I'm sorry?

10 THE WITNESS: Yeah.

11 BY MR. MURPHY:

12 Q. When your father was vice-president were there  
13 photographs of you and your father and the Biden family  
14 published on the Internet?

15 A. I'm sure there were, but I couldn't point to any  
16 specific one, if that's the question.

17 Q. No, I just wanted to know generally if that  
18 happened.

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Okay. And when your dad has been president have  
21 you also had photographs of you published with him on the  
22 Internet?

23 MR. LOWELL: Published by anybody?

24 MR. MURPHY: Published by anybody on the Internet.

25 MR. LOWELL: Like when The New York Times, The

1 Washington Post, or the LA Times does a picture --

2 MR. MURPHY: I'm not going to be specific, I just  
3 want to know generally were they published on the Internet.

4 MR. LOWELL: You know the answer to that question  
5 before you ask it.

6 THE WITNESS: Yes.

7 BY MR. MURPHY:

8 Q. Thank you. And you received a bachelor's degree  
9 from Georgetown?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. What type of bachelor's degree did you receive?

12 A. I was a history major.

13 Q. Okay. And then you got a -- you went to law  
14 school and graduated from Yale and got a juris doctorate?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. And you took the bar exam in which venue?

17 A. I took the bar exam in Connecticut.

18 Q. Okay. And did you get a law license in  
19 Connecticut?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Okay. And then you were also in the United States  
22 Naval Reserve?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. And were you administratively discharged from the  
25 Navy because you failed a urine test for drugs?

1 BY MR. MURPHY:

2 Q. Are you ready to proceed, Mr. Biden?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Okay. You're the son of President Biden, correct?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Okay. When your father was vice-president were  
7 there photographs of him and you and the family that were  
8 published on the Internet?

9 MR. LOWELL: I'm sorry?

10 THE WITNESS: Yeah.

11 BY MR. MURPHY:

12 Q. When your father was vice-president were there  
13 photographs of you and your father and the Biden family  
14 published on the Internet?

15 A. I'm sure there were, but I couldn't point to any  
16 specific one, if that's the question.

17 Q. No, I just wanted to know generally if that  
18 happened.

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Okay. And when your dad has been president have  
21 you also had photographs of you published with him on the  
22 Internet?

23 MR. LOWELL: Published by anybody?

24 MR. MURPHY: Published by anybody on the Internet.

25 MR. LOWELL: Like when The New York Times, The

1 MR. MURPHY: Okay. Let's go now next to  
2 Exhibit 610.

3 (Exhibit 610 was marked for identification)

4 BY MR. MURPHY:

5 Q. Okay. The first two pages of 610 are Bates  
6 stamped -- I'm going to go to the short number version,  
7 211. I have two of them here. I don't know if we made a  
8 little mistake. So 211, it says "Press." Are you familiar  
9 with this folder?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Okay. And then if we go to 212 and 213, it  
12 says -- it says "92Y." Can you tell us what this is  
13 involving?

14 A. It was an on -- it was an interview that I did for  
15 the 92nd Street YMCA.

16 Q. Then on the next page, 2 and 3, you have New York  
17 Times. And then it says, Hunter Biden, Matt Gaetz and  
18 Nonstop Depravity. I don't care about that. And there's a  
19 photo of an -- there's a photo I believe of your father and  
20 you and your brother on the right; is that correct?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. And was this also published by The New York Times?

23 A. I believe so.

24 Q. Okay. And then if we go to page 214, is this a  
25 New York Times article on your book?



1 A. Yes. I think it was an opinion piece done by  
2 Maureen Dowd.

3 Q. Okay. Then if we go to 215, it says Sunday  
4 Morning. Is this an article published about your book?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. And we've got another New York Times that runs  
7 from 216 through 218. And was that a New York Times  
8 article that was published about your book?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Okay. And then you've got CBS Morning. That's  
11 219. That was published about your book?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. And it also mentions something about a laptop  
14 report. Do you know what that was about?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. What was that about?

17 A. It was about a laptop report.

18 Q. And what laptop was that?

19 A. The laptop that -- the story that people referred  
20 to as the laptop story.

21 Q. Okay. And that involves your laptop that's been  
22 in the press?

23 A. No, it involves accusations of a laptop.

24 Q. And whose laptop were the accusations being made  
25 about?

1 A. The accusations were being made about me.

2 Q. Okay. If we go over to this next one, it's Vanity  
3 Fair, and it's 220 through 222. Is that also a memoir --  
4 or an article -- strike that.

5 Is that an article about your book?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Published by Vanity Fair?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Okay. And then if we go to 223 through 224,  
10 that's an article by Time about your book, correct?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. And then the next page is 225 through 227. That's  
13 an article by Cut about your book, correct?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. And then if we go over to 228, it says CNN. What  
16 does this document depict?

17 A. A picture of a -- I think Brian Stelter who was  
18 the host of the Reliable Sources on CNN.

19 Q. So it was a CNN news article that was broadcast,  
20 correct?

21 A. I don't know if it was a news article. I know  
22 that Brian Stelter spoke about my book on air.

23 Q. Okay. Then the next one is 229. It says Jimmy  
24 Kimmel Live! Do you see that?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Were you on the Jimmy Kimmel Show promoting your  
2 book?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Okay. And this is about that time that you were  
5 on his show, correct?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Okay. Then if we go to 230, there's a USA Today.  
8 Is this about your book?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. And then 231, The Hill, this is about your book?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Okay. 232, is this about your book, The Hill?

13 A. I haven't read this one, but I believe so, yes.

14 Q. Okay. And then 233 through 234, is this NBC News  
15 about your book, an article?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. And New York Times, this is another article about  
18 your book, 235 to 236, correct?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And then Entertainment, this is an article about  
21 your book, 237, correct?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. And those articles, as far as you know, they were  
24 published, correct?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Then we have a file now called -- let's go to  
2 Exhibit 611.

3 (Exhibit 611 was marked for identification)

4 BY MR. MURPHY:

5 Q. This document has a cover sheet. It's 238 and it  
6 says "Podcasts." Can you tell us what's in this folder?

7 A. I believe that it's a podcast that I appeared on  
8 in relation to promotion of my book.

9 Q. Okay. On page 239, is that an NPR podcast about  
10 your book?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. And when you did a podcast on any of the ones that  
13 are contained in this Exhibit 611, do you know if it was  
14 advertised once they're put up on the Internet so people  
15 could order copies of the podcasts?

16 A. I don't know for certain, but I assume so.

17 Q. Okay. Then 240, it says, "WTF with Marc Maron."  
18 Is this about your book?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And 241, this is a podcast by Pod Save America.  
21 Is this about your book?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. And then 242, is this an interview that was done  
24 of you on Inside the Hive with Emily Jane Fox and Joe  
25 Hagan?



1 A. Yes.

2 Q. And if we go to 243, Back From Broken, Hunter  
3 Biden, is that -- what is that?

4 A. That is also a podcast.

5 Q. Okay. And then if we go to 244, it says "The New  
6 Abnormal." Is that also a podcast about your book?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. And then 244, Rehab Confidential -- 245, Rehab  
9 Confidential, is that also a podcast about your book?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. And then 246, it says "Tough Cookies." Is that a  
12 podcast about your book?

13 A. Yes.

14 (Exhibit 612 was marked for identification)

15 BY MR. MURPHY:

16 Q. Now, the next one I'd like to show you is  
17 Exhibit 612. And it consists of the pages short version  
18 248 to 265. Do you have that in front of you?

19 A. Yes.

20 MR. LOWELL: Mr. Murphy, are you just going to ask  
21 him to confirm that everything that on its face says it's  
22 about his book is about his book?

23 BY MR. MURPHY:

24 Q. In looking at all of these pages contained in this  
25 exhibit, are they about your book?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. And these were international press articles that  
3 were published about your book?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Okay. And do you know where the articles were  
6 published?

7 A. In the -- in the publications, both hard copies I  
8 guess and on the Internet.

9 Q. Okay. Do you know of a gentleman by the name of  
10 Patrick Ho?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Okay. And who is Patrick Ho?

13 A. He was a client of mine.

14 Q. Prior to him being a client of yours did you ever  
15 have any business transactions with him?

16 A. No.

17 Q. And who referred you -- who referred him to you  
18 for you to represent him?

19 A. A business associate.

20 Q. Was that a Chinese business associate?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. And did that Chinese business associate pay you a  
23 million dollars to represent Mr. Ho?

24 MR. LOWELL: Objection.

25 THE WITNESS: I'm not going to talk about anything

1           A. I think that they're demonstrably untrue. My book  
2 was a New York Times bestseller.

3           MR. MURPHY: Okay. I'd like to now drop this and  
4 go to Exhibit 625.

5           (Exhibit 625 was marked for identification)

6 BY MR. MURPHY:

7           Q. Okay. This is a page I published -- or printed  
8 out of Amazon. And it has the title on it, Laptop from  
9 Hell: Hunter Biden, Big Tech, and the Dirty Secrets the  
10 President Tried to Hide. And this was published on  
11 November 30th, 2021.

12           Are you familiar with this book?

13           A. Yes, I'm familiar with it.

14           Q. Have you read the book?

15           A. No.

16           Q. How are you familiar with it?

17           A. Through news about the book.

18           Q. And do you take issue with anything that you're  
19 aware of that was published in this article -- or in  
20 this book? Strike that.

21           Do you take --

22           A. Yes.

23           Q. Let me finish because I messed up. I admit I made  
24 a mistake.

25           Do you acknowledge or do you have an opinion about

1 A. Yes. I'm saying to you I don't accept the premise  
2 that this is about a lap -- my laptop.

3 MR. MURPHY: I'd like to now go to  
4 Exhibit No. 627.

5 (Exhibit 627 was marked for identification)  
6 BY MR. MURPHY:

7 Q. And I'd like to refer you -- this is a 39-page  
8 exhibit. And I'd like you to go to page 2. This is an  
9 article called The Sordid Saga of Hunter Biden's Laptop.  
10 That's the thing in caps.

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. And are you familiar with this article?

13 A. I'm seeing it now. I'm vaguely familiar with it,  
14 yes.

15 Q. And then if we go over to page 34 of 39, there's a  
16 New York Times article. It says, The Sordid Saga of Hunter  
17 Biden's Laptop. And then there's a series of pages after  
18 that. Are you familiar with that?

19 A. Vaguely.

20 Q. And according to this article, the contents of  
21 your laptop have been released and disclosed to the public  
22 and they're publishing it all over the place. Is that  
23 true?

24 A. Is it true that they wrote that in this article?  
25 I don't know. Read the line and I'll tell you whether they



1 A. No.

2 MR. MURPHY: Okay. I'd like to go to  
3 Exhibit No. 633.

4 (Exhibit 633 was marked for identification)

5 BY MR. MURPHY:

6 Q. The only thing I'm going to ask you about this is  
7 are you familiar with this document and was it filed by the  
8 court -- with the court?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Thank you.

11 (Exhibit 634 was marked for identification)

12 BY MR. MURPHY:

13 Q. Next I'd like to show you a document marked as  
14 634. This is a publication dated September 12th, 2023.  
15 Are you familiar with this publication?

16 A. The New York Post?

17 Q. Yes.

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. And have you read this article before?

20 A. I believe that I've seen it before.

21 Q. Do you know if when there were any articles  
22 published about this Iran deal where there was an exchange  
23 of hostages for the payment of money that your name was  
24 ever mentioned in any of them?

25 A. I don't -- I don't even understand your question.

1 Q. Okay.

2 MR. MURPHY: Let's go on to the next one, 635.

3 (Exhibit 635 was marked for identification)

4 BY MR. MURPHY:

5 Q. This is an article that was published on  
6 October 6th, 2023, by Fox News. Do you see the title of  
7 this article?

8 A. Again, you're referring to these as articles.  
9 These are opinion pieces by politically motivated actors.  
10 And I can read the thing and Brandon Gillespie is not a --  
11 he's a, you know --

12 Q. Yeah. And is his statement -- is the statement in  
13 here true that you withdrew \$20,000 from your daughter  
14 Maisy's college fund and spent it on hookers and drugs  
15 after being warned you had just 44 cents left in your bank  
16 account?

17 A. I have no idea.

18 MR. MURPHY: I'd like to go to Exhibit No. 638.

19 (Exhibit 638 was marked for identification)

20 BY MR. MURPHY:

21 Q. And I only have a couple of questions on that.  
22 I'm not going to get into your tax case. I told the judge  
23 I wouldn't and I told your counsel I wouldn't. But what I  
24 would like to know is, is this the indictment that was  
25 filed with the court in connection with your tax case?

1 A. No.

2 MR. MURPHY: Okay. I'd like to go to  
3 Exhibit No. 633.

4 (Exhibit 633 was marked for identification)

5 BY MR. MURPHY:

6 Q. The only thing I'm going to ask you about this is  
7 are you familiar with this document and was it filed by the  
8 court -- with the court?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Thank you.

11 (Exhibit 634 was marked for identification)

12 BY MR. MURPHY:

13 Q. Next I'd like to show you a document marked as  
14 634. This is a publication dated September 12th, 2023.  
15 Are you familiar with this publication?

16 A. The New York Post?

17 Q. Yes.

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. And have you read this article before?

20 A. I believe that I've seen it before.

21 Q. Do you know if when there were any articles  
22 published about this Iran deal where there was an exchange  
23 of hostages for the payment of money that your name was  
24 ever mentioned in any of them?

25 A. I don't -- I don't even understand your question.

1 MR. LOWELL: Yeah, I think you could probably ask  
2 your client all about them. I think they know each other  
3 well.

4 (Exhibit 654 was marked for identification)

5 BY MR. MURPHY:

6 Q. Okay. And I'd like to refer you to  
7 Exhibit No. 654.

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Are you familiar with Exhibit 654?

10 A. You've got to move the document over or something.

11 Q. The only thing I wanted to show you was the last  
12 page which is the table of contents.

13 A. Yeah, what about it.

14 Q. Are you aware that they're selling a report on  
15 your laptop and it has -- this table of contents has a  
16 part of that report with photographs and documents and  
17 articles?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Are you claiming that Garrett Ziegler and Marco  
20 Polo damaged your reputation by publishing these things in  
21 their website?

22 MR. LOWELL: Again, you'll have to refer to the  
23 lawsuit. It speaks for itself.

24 BY MR. MURPHY:

25 Q. I'd like to know what your understanding is. Are



REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

I, GRACE M. THOMPSON, a Certified Shorthand Reporter licensed by the State of California, do hereby certify:

That prior to being examined, the witness named in the foregoing deposition was sworn by me to testify to the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth;

That the said deposition, taken down by me in stenotype, was thereafter reduced to printed matter by computer-aided transcription under my direction and supervision;

That the foregoing transcript is a true record of the testimony given by the witness and of all objections made at the time of the examination, to the best of my ability. That no review of the transcript was requested.

I further certify that I am not in any way interested in the outcome of this action and that I am not related to any of the parties thereto.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto subscribed my name this 19th day of August, 2024.

*Gracie Thompson*

GRACE M. THOMPSON  
C.S.R. No. 8194

# Exhibit D

# Exhibit 610

019

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Press

RHB00211



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Press

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92Y

## **Hunter Biden and Anne Lamott in Conversation: On Addiction, Recovery, Faith and Writing**



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# The New York Times

## Hunter Biden, Matt Gaetz and Nonstop Depravity

In a memoir of his vices, Hunter Biden sends a love letter to his  
brother.

April 3, 2021



RHB00213

## The New York Times

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The Times's report about a federal investigation into whether the Florida congressman had a sexual relationship with a minor and paid for her to travel has set off a scandal worthy of a pulp paperback, one swirling with claims of extortion, Ecstasy, an orgy, a hula hoop and sex trafficking, along with an Iranian hostage and, of course, a cameo by Roger Stone.

We are awash in sordid tales of Gaetz — the Beavis to Donald Trump's Butt-Head — creating a point system for sexual conquests and showing nude photos of women to other (often appalled) lawmakers on the House floor.

The moment crystallizes Republican hypocrisy. Trump and Gaetz viciously beat up on Hunter Biden, undeterred by their own vices.

As it happens, Hunter begins his new memoir, "Beautiful Things," with a scene of him watching Gaetz on TV reading a magazine excerpt about Hunter's addiction into the record of the House Judiciary Committee's hearing during Trump's first impeachment.

Biden writes:

"I don't want to make light of anybody's substance abuse issues ...' Gaetz said, snickering for the cameras as he made light of my substance abuse issues.

"Again, I'm not ... casting any judgment on any challenges someone goes through in their personal life," Gaetz continued, as he cast judgment on my personal life. ... Trump believed that if he could destroy me, and by extension my father, he could dispatch any candidate of decency from either party — all while diverting attention from his own corrupt behavior. Where's Hunter?

I'm right here. I've faced and survived worse. ... I'm not going anywhere. I'm not a curio or sideshow to a moment in history, as all the cartoonish attacks try to paint me. I'm not Billy Carter or Roger Clinton, God bless them. I am not Eric Trump or Donald Trump Jr."

Yes, for all his messy, self-destructive behavior, this Hunter has never slaughtered and posed with wild animals or whipped up a crowd for an insurrection.

For years, Joe Biden's second son has been a tabloid buffet of strippers, leaked photos, crack pipes, family love triangles, an incriminating laptop, a stray gun and ethical quandaries.

When the book was announced two months ago, it seemed like another bad calculation by Hunter, sure to overshadow his father's presidential honeymoon.

But it isn't. The book, ineffably sad and beautifully written, tears the tabloid face off the story about an American family that has experienced the highest of highs and the lowest of lows. The outline is familiar but the details are wrenching, proving that drugs can drag anyone down, even a famous politician's privileged son who drove into inner cities to buy crack in his Porsche and who had plenty of Burisma funny money," as he called it, to rehab-hop. Even his father, chasing him down a driveway after a family intervention, could not overcome "crack's dark power."

Page after page, you wonder: How the hell is this guy still alive?

At 51, Hunter has not lost his knack for getting tangled up in messes. He offered a disingenuous reply in a CBS interview airing Sunday about the notorious laptop he supposedly forgot to pick up from a Delaware repair shop: "There could be a laptop out there that was stolen from me. It could be that I was hacked. It could be that it was the — that it was Russian intelligence." No one is buying that.

The book recounts a litany of other times he left incriminating evidence in rental cars, got ripped off in drug deals or had his Gucci loafers, \$800 sports coat and Rimowa luggage stolen by the "scummy subculture" he was hanging with in Hollywood hotels.

And while he writes that he would not go on the Burisma board if he had to do it over again, because it allowed Trump to target him and his dad, he doesn't acknowledge that his Ukraine and China dealings were super swampy.

Still, the book illuminates the underworld of addiction — our national shame — that left the son of a vice president and presidential candidate sharing an apartment with his crack connection in the shadow of the White House; sweating, crying, chanting the "Hail Mary," dropping off the grid to live in a \$59-a-night Super 8 motel off I-95, and getting blacklisted by one Hollywood hotel after another because of his "traveling band of vampires" straight out of a Quentin Tarantino movie, "an opaque, sinister night world of interconnected lives that roamed L.A. between 2 a.m. and 8 a.m.," consisting of "thieves, junkies, petty dealers, over-the-hill strippers, con artists and assorted hangers-on." Not to mention Samoan gangsters with wild nicknames.

"It was," he writes, "nonstop depravity."

Hunter's odyssey to a "dark, bleak hole" tormented by the "Four Horsemen of the Crackocalypse" is a mythic saga: two brothers, Irish twins so inseparable they were referred to by a single moniker, BeauAndHunter; one who takes the straight path and the other, the crooked one. It is, above all, a love story. A love letter written to his dead brother, his soul mate and protector, Beau.

Even his "shared-grief oasis" romance with Hallie, Beau's widow, is explained by Hunter as a mistaken belief "that by loving each other we somehow could love him back into existence."

The memoir is, in essence, a response to Beau, whose first words in the hospital, after the crash that killed their mother and baby sister when they were little, were simply: "I love you. I love you. I love you."

"I really believe that its trauma and stress contributed to my brother's health problems," Hunter writes of the crash. He doesn't blame his addiction on it, but he writes that the miasma of unease afterward left him always feeling alone in a crowd.

People flocked to Beau, who became known as "the sheriff" in high school; he was the perfect son, husband, father, military officer and public official. He never had a drink until he was 21 and he quit at 30. Hunter had his first glass of champagne at 8, under a table at a party for his dad's re-election to the Senate in 1978. Beau went to A.A. meetings with Hunter and tried to save him, again and again.

"Eventually it became too much for me to even pour a drink," writes Hunter. "I'd use a kitchen knife to remove the plastic nub that controls the pour on a handle of vodka, then drink straight from the bottle."

When Hunter dives into the void in L.A., learning how to cook crack in his Chateau Marmont bungalow, he still manages to write letters addressed to his late brother, telling him how much he would have loved California.

"Did you know there are mountain lions and coyotes here?" he wrote Beau. "I mean RIGHT HERE? I wish we'd both learned to surf. I remember when we used to say that you, me, and Dad were going to ride motorcycles up and down the Pacific Coast Highway. I regret we never did. Love, Hunter."

RHB00214

*Maureen Dowd, winner of the 1999 Pulitzer Prize for distinguished commentary and author of three New York Times best sellers, became an Op-Ed columnist in 1995.*

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# **Hunter Biden on his memoir "Beautiful Things" and his struggles with substance abuse**

RHB00215



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## The New York Times

# Hunter Biden's Memoir: 7 Takeaways From 'Beautiful Things'

President Biden's son opens up about crack addiction, his romantic relationship with his sister-in-law and the new love that halted his cycle of despair.

**By Elisabeth Egan**

Published March 30, 2021 Updated April 1, 2021



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# The New York Times

Hunter Biden doesn't beat around the bush in his new memoir, "Beautiful Things," which comes out on April 6.

"I'm a 51-year-old father who helped raise three beautiful daughters," writes President Biden's younger son, who now has a year-old son of his own, in the prologue. "I've bought crack cocaine on the streets of Washington, D.C., and cooked up my own inside a hotel bungalow in Los Angeles. I've been so desperate for a drink that I couldn't make the one-block walk between a liquor store and my apartment without uncapping the bottle to take a swig. In the last five years alone, my two-decades-long marriage has dissolved, guns have been put in my face, and at one point I dropped clean off the grid, living in \$59-a-night Super 8 motels off I-95 while scaring my family even more than myself."

The book is equal parts family saga, grief narrative and addict's howl. Here is what readers will learn.

#### **He remembers the accident that killed his mother and sister.**

You probably know the story: It was Dec. 18, 1972. President Biden, then a newly elected senator, was in Washington. Neilia Hunter Biden — referred to as "my mommy" throughout "Beautiful Things" — took Hunter, who was 3; his brother, Beau, almost 4; and their 13-month-old sister, Naomi (known as "Casper," short for Casper the Friendly Ghost), to pick out a Christmas tree near their home in Wilmington, Del.

Hunter Biden describes how Naomi was "sound asleep in the front passenger seat tucked into a bassinet" — an eyebrow-raising detail by today's standards. "Suddenly, I see my mother's head turn to the right," he writes. "I don't remember anything else about her profile: the look in her eye, the expression of her mouth. Her head simply swings." At a four-way intersection, their car was broadsided by a tractor-trailer carrying corncobs.

The next thing Biden remembers is waking up in a hospital bed next to Beau: "He's mouthing three words to me, over and over: 'I love you. I love you. I love you.' That's our origin story."

#### **His romantic relationship with Beau's widow stemmed from 'grasping for the love we had both lost.'**

What began as a "shared-travails bond" with Hallie Biden blossomed into a full-blown, live-in arrangement as Hunter Biden's own marriage ended. He attempted to be a stable presence for his niece, nephew and sister-in-law, but acknowledges that none of it worked out.

"Our relationship began as a mutually desperate grasping for the love we had both lost, and its dissolution only deepened that tragedy," he writes. "It made the obvious clear: What was gone was gone permanently. There was no putting Humpty Dumpty back together again."

#### **While his father was vice president, Biden spent a month in a Washington apartment bingeing on vodka.**

Biden had his first glass of champagne when he was 8. In his 20s, he started drinking heavily after work — always drink five times more than anyone else. He went to rehab and relapsed after seven years — not long after his father joined the Obama ticket, effectively ending his son's lucrative lobbying career. Biden went back to rehab again, then relapsed in 2016 after Beau died.

The pattern continued, leading to 12- to 16-hour benders, withdrawal symptoms and a 20-pound weight loss: "I didn't eat anything much beyond what was available at the liquor store: Doritos, pork rinds, ramen noodles. Eventually my stomach couldn't even handle the noodles."

Biden used a kitchen knife to remove the plastic nub that regulates the flow of vodka from its jug, allowing him to guzzle faster. He writes, "I learned to twist and contort my body in such a way as to lessen the weight of the bottle, to make it more manageable." His father, who was then vice president, arrived at his home and said, "I know you're not fine, Hunter. You need help." Hunter Biden recalls: "He never let me forget that all was not lost. He never abandoned me, never shunned me, never judged me, no matter how bad things got — and believe me, from there they would get much, much worse."

#### **He purchased crack from a homeless addict who later moved in with him.**

"The relationship was symbiotic," he writes. "It was two crack addicts who couldn't find their way out of a paper bag. A one-act crack farce."

Biden bluntly describes his progression from smoking crack to cooking it; his abusive relationships with unsavory dealers and sticky-fingered hangers on; and the desperate tricks he used when faced with drug tests, including buying "clean urine." He attempted to quit crack with the help of ketamine infusions, psychoactive compounds and 5-MeO-DMT therapy, "which employs the gland secretions of the Sonoran Desert toad." He doesn't disclose how he paid for these treatments.

"Once you decide that you're the bad person everyone thinks you've become, it's hard to find the good guy you once were," Biden writes. "Eventually, I quit looking for him: I decided I wasn't the person everybody who loved me thought I was anymore."

RHB00217

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## The New York Times

Readers follow Biden weaving through a Los Angeles homeless encampment, looking to score his next hit. "I went through and stepped around people curled up on thin pieces of cardboard. Beyond them, I noticed a tilting, unlit tent. It was pitch black. All I saw was the gun pointed at my face," he writes. In the next chapter, we see Joe Biden chasing his son down the driveway after a family intervention: "He grabbed me, swung me around and hugged me. He held me tight in the dark and cried for the longest time."

**Biden doesn't make excuses for his addiction, but describes feeling 'alone in a crowd.'**

Of the car accident that killed his mother and sister, Biden writes, "I want to make it clear: I don't see that tragic moment as necessarily resulting in behaviors that lent themselves to addiction. That would be a cop-out."

But he describes a long-running feeling of unease, particularly in social situations. "That kind of insecurity is almost universal among those with real addiction issues — a feeling of being alone in a crowd. I've always felt alone in a crowd," he writes.

**When it comes to Ukraine, Biden's account is as dry as toast.**

Hunter Biden's first "legal-age employment" was at Wilmington's Brandywine Zoo — "I shoveled piles of llama manure as tall as I was and unclogged the drain in the otter pool" — but he is best known for his board membership at Burisma Holdings. "The episode that led to the impeachment of a president and landed me in the heart of the decade's biggest political fable is most remarkable for its epic banality," he writes.

He then proceeds to cover the incident in an 18-page chapter that reads like a research paper compiled by a reluctant student. Was Biden appointed to the board because of his last name?

Perhaps, he writes, but: "My response has always been to work harder so that my accomplishments stand on their own."

Did he display a lack of judgment? "No."

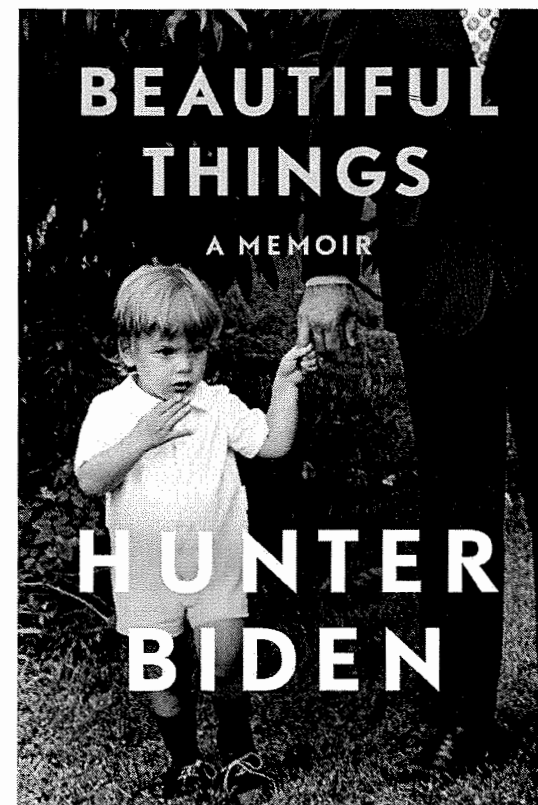
Would he do it again? "I did nothing unethical, and have never been charged with wrongdoing."

**He credits his wife, Melissa Cohen, for his sobriety.**

In March 2019, Hunter Biden was "done with the world of politics, of figuring out how to go out on the campaign trail with Dad, if it came to that, as I would have in any other election year," He writes, "I was a crack addict and that was that."

He had been asked to vacate a hotel in Los Angeles where he was living, but before he left, he befriended some people at the pool who gave him the number of a South African filmmaker named Melissa Cohen.

An hour into their first dinner, they declared their love to one another. An hour after that, Biden told Melissa he was a crack addict. She said, "Not anymore. You're finished with that."



RHB00218

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 CBS THIS MORNING

Politics Fed

**CBS NEWS** / *April 3, 2021, 7:46 AM*

# Hunter Biden opens up about family intervention and addresses laptop reports

RHB00219



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# VANITY FAIR

BOOKS

## HUNTER BIDEN'S UNFLINCHING MEMOIR IS EVERYTHING IVANKA TRUMP'S WASN'T

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In *Beautiful Things*, released Tuesday, Joe Biden's son tells the stories of grief and grit that have marked his life, revealing a humanity that had all but disappeared from the first family in the Trump era.

BY EMILY JANE FOX

APRIL 6, 2021



RHB00220



# VANITY FAIR

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Little more than three months into her father's presidency, **Ivanka Trump** came out with a memoir of sorts. You could have missed it. She barred herself from doing any press in order to skirt conflict of interest claims, as she'd recently taken up a senior role in her father's White House and couldn't go on the usual book-promotion blitz. She took up self-promoting in other forms, in other interviews, but the book talk remained hushed. As such, the book was kind of a bomb. People at the publishing house told me at the time that it was an absolute disaster. Not only could there be no press around its release, but it also happened to be devoid of any pulse, soul, or inkling that a sentient being wrote it. In it, the closest the reader got to the inner life of the former first daughter was a detailed look at her meticulous, color-coded digital schedule: "Right now, I play cars with **Joseph**, on the floor, for 20 minutes each day. **Arabella** loves books, so I make a note to read at least two per day to her and plan 'dates' to the library. With **Theodore**, I commit to ensuring that I can give him two or three of his bottles each day and rock him to sleep at night," she wrote in *Women Who Work*. "I also draft a general family list that includes things like how often **Jared** and I will go on an official date night (every other week!)." On the weekends they tended to a fig bush and peach tree in their garden. Her brand of brutal honesty existed in a confession that she "never really loved" bath time. The book fell so squarely within Ivanka's finely drawn, painfully crafted self-image; the art of her deal was presenting a filtered, faux intimacy, an aspirational, unattainable how-to for an audience that had no appetite for it.

Little less than three months into his father's presidency, **Hunter Biden** has come out with a memoir of his own. It could not be more opposite. Grounded and gritty and self-realized, *Beautiful Things*, out on Tuesday, is, at its core, as honest an account of addiction and grief as is possible to clearly see either of those two things. Hunter's name—thanks to the protracted game of political football that the right played throughout the election—as well as the contours of his story, thanks to his father's long public life, are familiar at this point. But he has bared the details of his yearslong struggle with alcohol and drugs, the tragic accident that took his mother and little sister, and the loss of his brother, Beau, to reveal an imperfect, haunting humanity.

Vithin is no neatly arranged to-do list or maniacally managed day plan. Here is the son of a former vice president and presidential hopeful prophesizing about his new superpower—"the ability to find crack in my town, at any time, no matter how unfamiliar the terrain." How he got a "master class in crackology" from a woman whom he let crash with him in an apartment not too far from the White House, the two of them interacting "like a deranged, crack-addled version of *The Odd Couple*," and learned to cook crack in a bungalow at the Chateau Marmont in Los Angeles, from which he later got politely kicked out, as he had "come in and out to deal to him, party with him, steal from him." "Minimum-wage bouncers with side businesses—drugs, girls, access to VIP rooms for tips," he writes, "now had a new hustle: Me." He lost out of the stolen wallets and credit cards, the Gucci loafers and \$800 sport coats and Rimowa luggage charged to his name. He pogoed through rehabs; sped on a Palm Springs highway only to land in a gulch after ending up in midair at 80 miles per hour; dropped in and out of contact with his daughters and his dad. He got divorced. He dated his brother's widow, not in the sordid way the tabloids described it. "It seems obvious now," he writes of the relationship,

"but then it was this unspoken, unacknowledged dynamic that had begun to impel us both: the idea that we could keep Beau alive by being together—that by loving each other we somehow could love him back into existence."

It is, by all measures, the opposite of Ivanka's book—a stark, real-world example of the gulf between the former first family and the current one. If the Trumps are an alien, manufactured, made-for-cable-news shell filled with personal ambition, the Bidens are familiar, individually flawed but undivided, held together by shared tragedy and actual values. "It's a Biden love story," he writes of his book, "which means it's complicated: tragic, humane, emotional, enduring, widely consequential, and ultimately redemptive." The Trumps are entirely imperfect but remain obsessed with presenting themselves as flawless. The Bidens wear their imperfections on their sleeves and find grace in where they might have fallen short.

Hunter leans into the characterization of him and his family as the other to the Trumps. In its opening pages, *Beautiful Things* starts off with the Trump camp's attacks against him for the work he did in Ukraine and China, "even as [Trump's] own children had pocketed millions in China and Russia." He makes the comparison several times throughout the book. In the chapter dedicated to his much-talked-about work on the board of the Ukrainian energy company Burisma—which, in its sum, reads straight and lawyered—he writes, "There's no question my last name was a coveted credential. That has always been the case—do you think if any of the Trump children ever tried to get a job outside of their father's business that his name wouldn't figure into the calculation? My response has always been to work harder so that my accomplishments stand on their own."

Hunter is the other in his own family too, and as much as this book is about writing his own version of his story after years of his father's political adversaries spinning their conspiracy-filled tales, it's a story about them too. "I want to illuminate, with honesty and humility and not just a little awe, how family love was my only effective defense against the many demons I ran up against," he writes. And there is no greater love story in this book than the one between the two brothers—Irish twins whose birthdays fell just a day apart, meaning they would celebrate together every year, alternating the day on which they did. They were known by one name: "BeauAndHunter." They went to every party together. They double-dated, even to prom. Friends saw them as "different but not as separate. Two sides of the same coin." Hunter writes that his dad would say that Beau was his soul and Hunter was his heart, that he believed Beau could one day be president and that Hunter would help him get there. Beau was known as "the sheriff" in high school—the "designated driver" and also "the designated leader." Beau, Hunter writes, was beloved, engaging, approachable. He had complete confidence. People flocked to him. Hunter, Hunter writes, is someone who, for years, felt uneasy at social gatherings, in politics, in public and in private. "It was a lonely place to be as a child, and it's a lonely place to be now," he writes. When his ex-wife was spending a lot of time with first lady **Michelle Obama** at the White House during their administration, since their kids had become school friends and his dad was, of course, there too, he didn't hang around much. He had relapsed two years after the election and didn't feel comfortable. He got the feeling, he writes, that there were people who didn't feel comfortable around him, either. "That kind of insecurity is almost universal among those with real addiction issues—a feeling of being alone in a crowd. I've always felt alone in a crowd." He and his brother "thought alike but acted on our thoughts differently."

RHB00221

# VANITY FAIR

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The biggest difference, Hunter notes, was that he drank and Beau did not.

It is impossible not to feel sorrow for this otherness that he felt, especially as he takes you through the depths and details of his darkness. But there is a lot shared too. Between Hunter and Beau, mostly. Between Hunter and Beau and **Joe Biden** too. All of the Bidens, really. There are moments that leave readers in such raw emotionality that I had to put the book down and walk away for a while. Like, for instance, when Hunter writes about how his family supported him and his brother after his mother and sister died. "We were almost ashamed to admit to any sadness we might have felt because of how enveloped we were in that familiar embrace," he writes. "It almost felt like a betrayal to say that we missed our mom when, nearly from the moment we left the hospital, we had my dad's sister—**Aunt Val**—move in and not only take care of our immediate daily needs but also be as warm and tender and emotive as a mother figure could possibly be." Or the evening when his dad, mom, and daughters met him with a surprise intervention, Joe Biden pleading with his one living son to get help and then chasing him down a dark driveway. "I don't know what else to do," he cried out. "I'm so scared. Tell me what to do."

In this, the Bidens are exactly the kind of family they purported to be throughout the campaign. Empathetic, fallible, in the muck just like we all are. When **Donald Trump** tried to weaponize the Biden family's messier moments for political gain during one of the presidential debates last fall, Joe Biden reframed it. "My son," he said, looking straight to camera, "like a lot of people you know at home, had a drug problem. He's overtaken it. He's fixed it. He's worked on it. And I'm proud of him. I'm proud of my son."

The book operates on a Biden-esque strategy of underpromise, over-deliver, as we've seen with the administration so far. There was little fanfare leading up to its publication. To date, Hunter has taped just three interviews for the book's publicity, none done in print. The work is mostly speaking for itself. As Hunter writes, it is a love story, after all. A twisted one. One that certainly does serve him, and allows him to redefine himself, make some money, and become the artist he always wanted to be. But it's one we can all, in some way, see ourselves or our families or our hearts in at the same time. What could be more Biden than that?



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## Hunter Biden On Making His Own Crack, Living with His Dealer and His Family's Effort to Keep Him Alive

There's a too-brief scene late in Hunter Biden's new memoir where Dr. Jill Biden tricks the crack-addled awayer and consultant to come for dinner at the family home in Wilmington, Del. Upon walking through the door, Hunter sees the family gathered — along with counselors from one of the countless rehab facilities that pop up throughout his new memoir.

There is screaming and there are tears. Future President Joe Biden is described as terrified and pleading with his son. One of Hunter's daughters takes his car keys away from him. He eventually agrees to his family's plea to try another round of rehab, just not at the one they picked. He wants to go to one in Maryland. The family, after 15 years of rounds of rehab and relapse, agrees. Frantic phone calls follow and appointments are made for that evening. Hunter's brother's widow (and his ex-girlfriend) Hallie ferries him to the front gates. Once she drives away, Hunter summons an Uber, checks into a hotel near BWI, smokes the crack he had hidden in his bag and flies to Los Angeles for yet another bender.

This probably isn't the portrait of the Biden family that the President and his advisers would have painted. But *Beautiful Things*, published today, is the world according to Hunter Biden, son of the current President and a mainstay on the Washington scene until the death of his brother sent him in a dark spiral. It is a tragic tale that finally rounds the bend when his current wife Melissa tells him flat-out that his days as a crack user are over.

The tabloid fodder is in it, for sure. So is the politics, although frankly it's not needed. The book is a deeply personal account of his relationship with his brother, the former Attorney General of Delaware, probably he state's future Governor and possibly a President Beau Biden. Hunter Biden is careful never to blame his own struggles with addiction on Beau, but the timeline of his waggon tumbles and Beau's death at age 16 line-up neatly.

More importantly, it's the story of redemption. The fact that Hunter Biden is even alive to write it is enough. There are countless visits to rehab. There are searches for crack in Nashville. There's the 14-day bender during which he flipped one rental car and left his brother's AG badge and a bunch of drugs in another. He learns to cook his own crack — and he does so — at Chateau Marmont, one of the many LA hotels that lost patience with Hunt's party-loving entourage and suddenly didn't have availability. He chases a probably hallucinated barn owl through the California desert. Hunter Biden has escaped what he calls "the Four Housemen of the Crackocalypse," and he is here to tell us about it.

To be sure, the book is sometimes tone-deaf in its handling of privilege, with casual mentions of hanging out in the Senate steam room as a young man with the likes of Ted Kennedy. Historians would murder to eavesdrop on Dan Inouye telling Hunter Biden stories from World War II over BLTs while a distracted Joe Biden practiced politics in the Senate dining room.

It treats out-of-control drug use as a matter-of-fact part of Hunter Biden's life, at one point saying Jim Morrison had nothing on his own "shenanigans." He brushes over his relationships with women as something he has no memories of; his child with an Arkansas woman merits little more than a line.

Yet in an era of indulgent political memoirs that seek to promote a candidate's platform and cast the family as picture-perfect, *Beautiful Things* stands out for its raw truths. Clearly, no political fixer had a hand near this manuscript. This is not the Instagram version of Hunter Biden's life. This is the version where every frame has a squint, smudge and, occasionally, a leech taking advantage of the tab left open with room service.

Throughout the memoir Hunter casts himself not as the family screw-up but its shrewd savior. Where he went around his father's embryonic presidential campaign for a series of phone interviews — while smoking crack alone in LA — with a *New Yorker* writer, he didn't see a communications misfire. He saw himself doing a favor for his dad and family. "Nobody was going to vote or not vote for my dad because his son is a crack addict," he notes. And when it came out that he was dating his dead brother's wife, he enlisted his dad to dutifully release a statement normalizing a potential situation where Uncle Hunt became Step-Dad Hunt to Beau's kids, and cousins became step-siblings. After Hunter surprised his family with the news he was both engaged to Melissa after only a few dates, the family dutifully endorsed it.

Hunter explicitly rejects comparisons to the likes of Billy Carter and Roger Clinton, perceived grifters who traded on their family connection. While acknowledging his last name helped him win access to jobs and meetings, he also puts up his own resume as a reason for hefty consulting fees. He writes that his response to those who claim nepotism as "been to work harder so that my accomplishments stand on their own." Yet six pages later, he treats his lucrative consulting gigs as a way to advance U.S. interests. "Having a Biden on Burisma's board was a loud and unmistakable f— -you to Putin," Hunter Biden writes, in one of the few passages where he addresses his ties to Ukraine that have been weaponized by former President Donald Trump and other Republicans against the elder Biden.

At times, it may be tempting for a reader to throw the book across the room in anger. Here is seemingly a charmed prince, complaining about how Fox News is covering his personal life? A member of a family where unconditional love is not an ideal but rather the real thing, grouching about the Trump campaign selling "Where's Hunter?" T-shirts? An individual with the means to get help but seemingly unable to make the initial ask, and when it's made, detours violently away?

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## Hunter Biden On Making His Own Crack, Living with His Dealer and His Family's Effort to Keep Him Alive

But addiction, as Hunter writes, is the great equalizer and doesn't care about pedigree. Biden got into the habit of taking his laptop and two coats to the garage of his house to drink heavily and watch *Battlestar Galactica*, thinking he was hiding his addiction from his then-wife. After she exiled him from their home, Hunter moved into a building just around the corner from me in Washington. In his book, he talks about not being able to make it home from the corner liquor store with a plastic jug of vodka without taking a swig of it, all while cashing huge monthly retainers from clients. Days of 16-hour booze fests were just the start. His live-in dealer would say he "graduated into crackology's PhD program."

But Hunter's sense of non-belonging starts much earlier, way back in elementary school and continuing into college. Hunter Biden was bullied. He was unwelcome as a walk-on at Georgetown's football program and didn't last a season. So bad were his years at Georgetown, Joe Biden would from time to time break his routine and stay overnight in Washington so Hunter could share a hotel with him and get away from the dorms. While his then-wife Kathleen became close to Michelle Obama and would join her for cocktails at the White House, Hunter writes he never felt welcome and suspected folks were uncomfortable with him there. The whole campaign feeding frenzy on his business dealings only left him feeling a victim of Joe Biden's career.

Hunter is the first of three main characters in this story. The second of course is Beau Biden. His death was the singular topic of Joe Biden's post-White House memoir, a heart-breaking work that chronicled that pained period in the Biden clan. That loss is a running theme through Hunter Biden's book, too. But where Joe Biden used an Irish poet's deft touch and deep introspection, Hunter Biden deploys a millennial's lack of filter. The near-constant hum of profanity suggests this is Hunter Biden dictating authentically onto the page.

While he continuously grieves Beau in every page, there's also a brotherly competition that is present. For instance, Beau worked desk jobs through college and kept banker's hours while Hunter worked 6 a.m. until 10 p.m. unloading railcars, worked in a restaurant, as a valet and as a Senate delivery aide. Hunter says he paid off Beau's student loans.

You can feel some resentments in the writing. For instance, Hunter decides against pursuing an MFA to support his unplanned family. He then casts himself as having few better options than working as a credit card company and later as a lobbyist to pay off his own massive student loans. He complains that he never was paid for his work with the World Food Program and his compensation as Amtrak's chairman covered just his expenses. And he writes that he was both worried and aggrieved when then-VP Biden got an emergency briefing on Beau's experimental medical treatment elsewhere in the hospital while Hunter was waiting for an update in his brother's room. The doctors were following protocol, Hunter Biden writes, but it left the brother feeling iced out.

The third character is Joe Biden, for whom you get a picture of as patriarch of a deeply loved but highly erratic family. As a boy, Hunter pretended to run away from home, leaving the Bidens — who had already buried a mother and sister — panicked. Hunter Biden likens it to Tom Sawyer attending his own funeral. Much later, when Hunter was struggling with addiction in Washington, Joe Biden convinced the Secret Service to slim down his detail so he could slip to visit Hunter at his Logan Circle apartment and make this dire assessment: "I know you're not fine, Hunter. You need help."

Unfortunately for readers, Hunter Biden dives into politics when it comes to his father, and his hand proves rather amateur. For instance, Joe Biden ended his 1988 run for the White House in a plagiarism scandal that Hunter calls a "political hit job" over "loosely appropriated parts of a speech." In the one chapter entirely devoted to politics, he comes across as defensive and outraged that his swampiness got called out. He says joining the board of Ukrainian energy company Burisma was not a lapse in judgement, although he admits he wouldn't do it again. He ponders whether his father owes him the apology for it becoming an issue, or if the tables should be turned.

Bidenologists will find some nuggets buried in here, as well. For instance, the Biden family home in Delaware — once owned by a du Pont — was too expensive to heat in the winter, so the Bidens would put up drywall to close off half of it to reduce the energy bills. And Hunter writes what many have suspected for years: Joe Biden was never going to retire until he won the Oval Office.

Well, Joe Biden is in the Oval. And now Hunter Biden has published a book worthy of that MFA he skipped to pay the bills. Maybe America has a first son's story of addiction to help it finally confront this deep problem that has haunted so many families across the nation. It's not a glossy version of Biden family lore that the President's advisers might have preferred. But maybe it's what the country needed to see.

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# THE CUT

8 Revelations From Hunter Biden's New Memoir

By Katie Heaney [@KTHaney](#)

RHB00225



# THE CUT

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President Joe Biden's son Hunter, now 51 years old, has had an often publicly tumultuous past. In the lead-up to the 2020 presidential election, the Trump campaign targeted Hunter — who spoke in support of his father alongside his sister, Ashley, at the Democratic National Convention — highlighting his allegedly corrupt business dealings in a digital ad campaign meant to cast an immoral shadow over Biden's prospective presidency. We know how that worked out: Joe Biden became the 46th president of the United States notwithstanding his son's controversies, though Trump took some time to admit it. Hunter Biden has had a famously tragic family past, losing his mother and younger sister to a car crash when he was a very young child and then his brother, Beau, an Iraq War veteran, to brain cancer in 2015. Hunter has struggled with substance abuse and made headlines for dating his brother's widow, Hallie, in 2017. (They split in 2019; months later, he married his now-wife, Melissa, a week after they met.) He is a lawyer, venture capitalist, and sometime painter. He delves into all of the above (some in more detail than others) in his new memoir, *Beautiful Things*, which will be published by Gallery Books on April 6. Here are the biggest takeaways.

## 1. The book is primarily “a Biden love story.”

The book's title was inspired by Hunter's late brother's mantra: “Beautiful things,” meaning the pursuit of simple joys and noble causes they hoped to share after Beau recovered from cancer. Much of the early part of the book focuses on Beau's diagnosis and the various treatments the family pursued in an attempt to beat his very slim odds of survival. Hunter writes that if he could do it again, he wouldn't agree to put Beau through most of the treatments — especially the radiation, which, he writes, made it difficult for Beau to speak or put on his shoes.

In the last weeks of Beau's life, Hunter writes that he had to help his brother use the toilet and the shower, and he set up an app on Beau's phone meant to regulate his breathing. He says they spoke little about practical concerns, like what to do if Beau were to die. Instead, they discussed Beau's previously announced run for governor of Delaware, which he had hoped to resume after the surgery. “Politics are in the Biden bloodstream,” Hunter writes. Beau died a little over a month later; his last words to his brother were to describe the view from his front porch as beautiful.

## 2. He remembers the family's tragic car wreck.

Although he was under 3 years of age at the time of the crash, Hunter writes that he has a vivid “single flash of memory” of the car accident that claimed his mother's and baby sister's lives. (He acknowledges that the memory may be a composite of family stories, news accounts, and “actual repressed memory.”) He describes seeing himself in the back of the family's white Chevy station wagon alongside Beau, his sister asleep in a bassinet in the front passenger seat, when a tractor-trailer slammed into the side of their car, killing his mother and sister instantly. He then remembers waking up in a hospital bed with Beau in the next bed over, mouthing “I love you” to Hunter over and over. The phrase becomes another of the book's mantras and the foundation of the brothers' friendship. The fatal car wreck took place three weeks before Joe Biden was elected to the Senate.

## 3. He denies any wrongdoing concerning Burisma Holdings.

Hunter's connections to Burisma Holdings, a private natural-gas producer in Ukraine, became the source of political scandal (and the aforementioned Trump attack ads) in the 2010s, but in his book, Hunter insists there was “no criminal sexiness, no international hocus pocus ... no there here.” Hunter joined the board of the company in 2014, served for five years, and was reportedly paid as much as \$50,000 per month in that capacity. Because he held the job while the company was facing investigations backed by the Obama administration, his role was criticized as a potential conflict of interest for his father when he was vice-president.

The Burisma chapter is predictably defensive. Hunter emphasizes that he “only bought a 10 percent stake” after his father left office and says the monthly salary was commensurate with “compensation given to board members at some Fortune 500 companies.” Although Hunter writes that he did “nothing unethical,” he nonetheless would not take the job again.

## 4. He had his first drink at 8 years old.

A self-described alcoholic and drug addict, Hunter says he sneaked a glass of Champagne at a party celebrating his dad's 1978 reelection to the Senate. He drank more intentionally beginning at age 14 with a friend who, later that summer, killed a passenger in a drunk-driving accident. Hunter continued drinking regularly on weekends; he writes that alcohol “seemed to solve every unanswered question about why I felt the way I felt.” He adds that Beau was concerned but “wasn't a scold.”

At 18, Hunter was arrested for cocaine possession, which he says scared him straight, if only temporarily. He characterizes his drinking as manageable until the year 2000 or so, when his family moved back to Delaware and his law work grew more demanding. He tried to stop several times before finally admitting himself to rehab for a month at the age of 33. When he completed treatment, Beau encouraged him to begin attending AA meetings, and Hunter was sober for ten years until he decided to order a Bloody Mary (and then two more) on a flight home from a business trip to Spain. This swiftly led to a relapse and another trip to rehab.

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**5. His relapse followed soon after Beau's death.**

As early as Beau's funeral, where Hunter delivered a eulogy despite dreading public speaking, he remembers feeling concerned that Beau's passing would impact his fragile sobriety. Hunter's marriage to his then-wife, Kathleen, was deteriorating around the same time, though he didn't realize it then. They had endured previous struggles with his alcoholism, and Hunter believed they could make it work. According to him, Kathleen decided their marriage was over the day Beau died.

After the couples-therapy session at which this revelation was made, Hunter writes, he bought a bottle of vodka, ending his then months-long sobriety, and entered rehab under an assumed name (Hunter Smith) within weeks. The rehab didn't take, and he describes going on to drink a bottle of vodka every day for a month, dropping 20 pounds and losing track of time. Hunter got sober at another facility and months later relapsed again — this time becoming hooked on crack over a period of three years ending in early 2019. During that time, his otherwise unhoused dealer lived with Hunter for five months. ("The two of us interacted like a deranged, crack-addled version of *The Odd Couple*," Hunter writes.)

**6. His relationship with Hallie Biden was brief and troubled.**

Hunter acknowledges that he and his late brother's wife had a romantic relationship forged by shared grief, though his account of the relationship spans only about six pages. It overlapped with the three-year crack bender he describes as taking place between 2016 and 2019 (which is when they broke up and he got clean). He describes them as a "star-crossed coupling" that "made perfect sense except for how it made no sense at all." He says his motivation lay largely in wanting to care for his late brother's children and felt that being with their mother might somehow keep Beau alive. Hunter writes that the relationship "blew up" after it became public and he was characterized as "the sicko sleeping with [his] brother's wife." He claims the fallout led to his losing nearly all of his clients and having to resign from his position with the World Food Program. Of the relationship, he writes, "There was no putting Humpty Dumpty together again."

**7. His parents staged an intervention.**

In late 2018 and early 2019, when Hunter was in the throes of his crack addiction, Jill Biden invited him to a family dinner at the senior Bidens' home in Delaware. He agreed but "knew something was up" when he was also met by his children and two counselors from a rehab center he had previously visited. Hunter fled the house, chased by his father, who caught him in a hug. Hunter agreed to go to a different rehab. Hallie dropped him off at its front gate, but Hunter then called an Uber and fled for the airport. At a California hotel, he met a drunk guy poolside who suggested Biden meet a friend in her 30s named Melissa. Hunter later texted her, asking to meet for a drink; she declined. But the next morning, she texted to ask him for coffee. Hunter assumed they would meet for a hookup but describes being instantly smitten, telling her that she had the same eyes as Beau and that he was in love with her. An hour later, she said she felt the same. When he confessed his crack addiction, she said, "You're finished with that." He agreed and credits her with nursing him back to health and sobriety. They have matching tattoos and were married seven days after meeting.

**8. He's running (probably).**

Although it was Beau whom President Biden expected to one day become president himself — and Beau that his brother spends much of the book extolling — Hunter's memoir seems to be establishing a framework for an eventual campaign of his own. He recounts childhood days at the Senate Office Building, where both Biden sons spent significant time visiting their father at work. Anecdotes about bipartisan friendliness from other then-senators seem intended to bolster his father's bipartisan appeal as well as the potential for his own. Hunter positions himself as both political insider ("having been around the Senate since I was three years old") and outsider ("Beau and I didn't grow up in Washington. We didn't really hang out with other senators' kids"), much as his father had done before him, and similarly praises the family's bootstraps work ethic, Christian progressivism, and common-sense centrism. Hunter insists he's different from other famous political sons, but it's hard to envision a future in which he *doesn't* run for political office or to believe this book isn't meant as his first platform.

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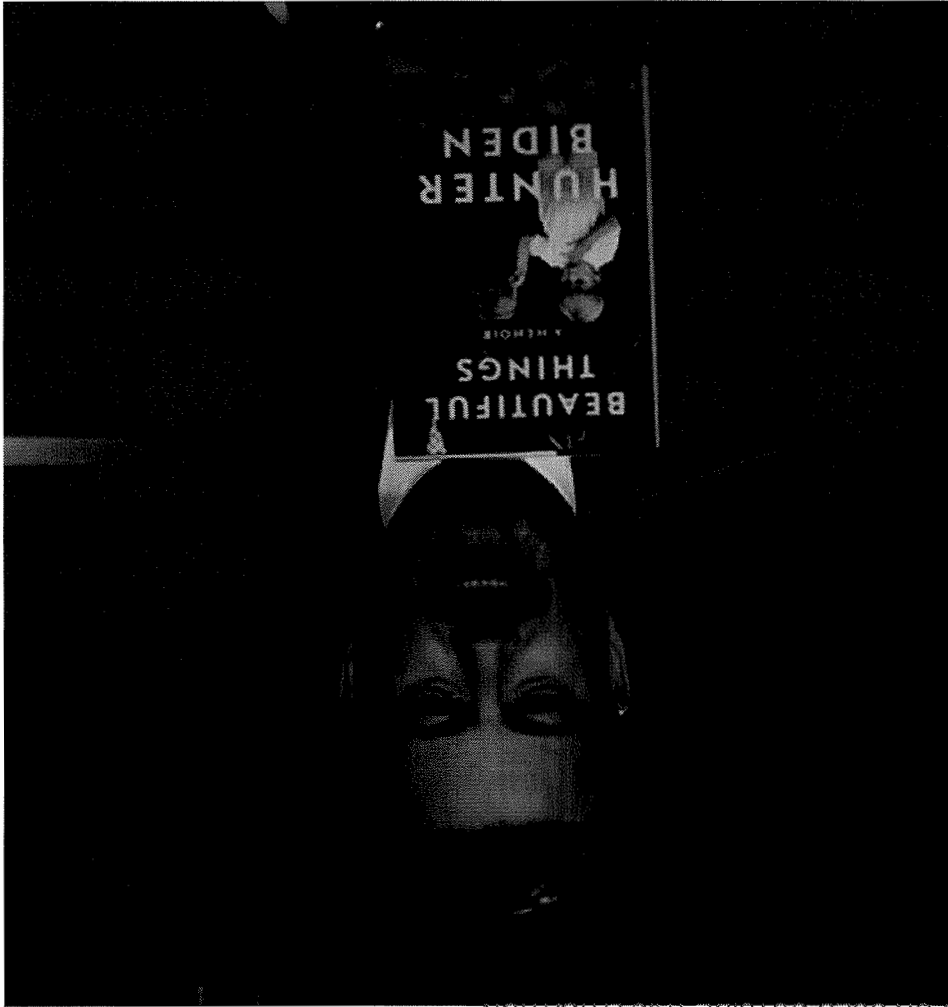
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USA  
TODAY

# Hunter Biden's shocking tell-all is important. Here's why.

**Sara M Moniuszko** USA TODAY

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In his revealing memoir "Beautiful Things," Hunter Biden tells a story about addiction that at times may appear sensational: smoking crack cocaine every 15 minutes, the two weeks he spent thousands of dollars on drugs, the intervention led by the now president of the United States that ended with his father chasing him around outside their family home in Delaware.

But mental health experts say his journey is also deeply relatable for others living with addiction: the shame he struggled with, the relapses he overcame, the humility he eventually found.

His brutal honesty about his struggles with addiction is important for his own healing as well as for others living with substance use disorders, experts say.

Kelly E. Green, a psychologist and associate professor at St. Edward's University, said when public figures like Biden tell their stories it plays "a really important role in de-stigmatizing addiction and (illustrates) the multiple paths to recovery."

In the book, Biden notes his privileged background. His first taste of alcohol was a glass of champagne at 8 years old, the night his father was reelected to the Senate in 1978. His drinking followed him into adulthood. He eventually went to rehab but describes relapsing, which can be a normal part of recovery, in November 2010 after having three Bloody Marys on a plane while his father held one of the most powerful positions in the world.

Green said Biden's disclosures illustrate how addiction can impact anyone, regardless of social class.

"What we think of as a crack addict is not always accurate," she said. "There's a lot of misunderstanding and misrepresentation about addiction and recovery in popular media. TV and movies often show a very stereotypical depiction." It's a point Biden highlighted in his book. "We're all alone in our addiction. It doesn't matter how much money you have, who your friends are, the family you come from," he wrote. "In the end, we all have to deal with it ourselves – first one day, then another one, and then the next."

**'People see themselves in other people's stories'**

"Beautiful Things" may also be validating for readers going through similar situations.

"I want those still living in the black hole of alcoholism and drug abuse to see themselves in my plight and then to take hope in my escape, at least so far," Biden wrote.

Green explained that sharing is a key component to recovery and works well for some who are struggling.

"We know that one of the ways that groups like AA (Alcoholics Anonymous) are impactful is that people see themselves in other people's stories, and so that can really cut through some of the shame," Green said. "And we know that addiction is really driven by shame, and so the more vocal people are about what they've been through, the more it gives others the sense that they are not alone."

Debra Jay, author, speaker and former addiction expert on "The Oprah Winfrey Show," said Biden's candor is important. "Because of its brutal honesty, it not only addresses the unrelenting power of addiction but the misery of living with it," she said. "That is where the empathy comes from... It can take anyone down, no matter who your family is."

**Biden's book is important for his healing**

Green said Biden's book may also be a helpful piece in his own journey of recovery and healing, explaining that "shame grows in the shadows."

"By opening up about your story and owning that it is part of you, it helps you battle that self-shame and helps you embrace and accept those parts of yourself with more compassion, and that self-compassion is such a key piece to recovery," she added.

Biden noted writing the book was "wasn't easy." "Sometimes it was cathartic; other times it was triggering," he wrote.

Jay cautioned that those recovering should tread lightly when it comes to rehashing their own stories.

"When they first get into recovery, they're very vulnerable and doing this can have a negative effect," she said. "But once they have some real stability in their recovery, I think it can be great."

As the son of a sitting president, Biden had another layer of difficulty in his journey to sobriety: being in the public eye. Writing the book may have also helped him take control of his story.

"He has not been afforded the privacy of living through his addiction and his recovery outside of the media, so I think it would make perfect sense that he would write this book ... (to) control the narrative," Jay said.

Green added Biden's platform puts his sobriety journey under a microscope, but his story is relatable.

"That also puts him in a much more powerful role to be able to say, 'Yeah, I'm not perfect, my recovery path wasn't perfect,' and it's actually more consistent with most people out there who actually did take multiple tries, down the recovery path for something to stick," Green said.

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# The Memo: Hunter Biden and the politics of addiction

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The president's son spoke about searching on his hands and knees for crack cocaine in an interview that aired on Sunday — and even his political opponents did not seek to take advantage.

That alone demonstrates that, for all the other corrosive factors afflicting American politics, the nation has at least taken some halting steps forward in how it sees drug- and alcohol-related issues.

The arc of progress can be traced through recent presidents.

It's only a generation since then-candidate Bill Clinton felt obligated to claim that he "didn't inhale" while experimenting with weed as a student.

President George W. Bush was elected after referring to his problems with alcohol in a way that was not dishonest — but not especially candid either. "When I was young and irresponsible, I was young and responsible," was his soundbite of choice to block further inquiries.

President Obama's rise to the White House came despite an admission of low-level cocaine use in his earlier memoir, "Dreams From My Father." Some opponents tried to weaponize the admission, but the issue did not get great traction with the general public.

Hunter Biden is admittedly in a different category, neither holding nor seeking public office. But his willingness to be so open about his experiences while his father is president — and the apparent lack of political blowback for doing so — is a positive sign.

It seems that every once in a while a huge figure is willing to come along and share their story and try to smash through the stigma," said Mary Bono, a former congresswoman from California who served from 1998 to 2013.

Bono was in the vanguard of elected officials warning about the scale of the nation's addiction problem.

"I don't know Hunter Biden, but the more stories about this, and the more someone talks about their struggles, it helps people," Bono said.

Biden's newly published memoir, "Beautiful Things," paints an unflinching picture of his addiction to crack and alcohol. In it, he writes of being "so desperate for a drink that I couldn't make the one-block walk between a liquor store and my apartment without uncapping the bottle to take a swig."

In an interview with CBS "Sunday Morning" to publicize the book, he talked about having "spent more time on my hands and knees picking through rugs, smoking anything that even remotely resembled crack cocaine."

He told interviewer Tracy Smith: "I probably smoked more Parmesan cheese than anyone that you know."

President Biden has praised his son's memoir. In an interview with Norah O'Donnell of CBS News back in February, the president lauded "the honesty with which he stepped forward and talked about the problem."

... It gave me hope reading it."

Patrick Kennedy, the scion of the famed family and a former congressman from Rhode Island, also praised the younger Biden for his openness.

Kennedy crashed his car into a barricade on Capitol Hill in the early hours of the morning while in office in 2006. He entered rehab soon afterward and did so again in 2009. He is now a mental health advocate.

"Hunter taking his platform to talk about something that every family has gone through to some degree is a good thing," Kennedy said. "But I think what's driving an even greater acceptance in talking about these things is that it is impossible to treat this part of health care if people are being secretive about their illness. The illness thrives on secrecy." Both Kennedy and Bono can remember a time, not long ago, when such openness was more difficult — and more risky.

"I was the author of the biggest mental health bill on the Hill, and I myself was scared to go to treatment because I was worried people would think I hadn't recovered," Kennedy recalls. Back then, "even though I am a champion, I am stigmatized so much that I don't want to get continuing, ongoing care because I'm worried it will seem that I don't have it together." Bono recalled talking publicly about her teenage son's addiction to prescription drugs, roughly a decade ago.

"Some people said, 'You were just a bad mother. It's your fault.' There is still a huge obstacle that we have to surmount," she remembered. The stigma has begun to be eroded partly because of the sheer scale of the problem.

Data from Gallup for 2018 and 2019 indicates that almost half of U.S. adults, 46 percent, have had direct experience of alcohol or other drugs causing problems in their family. In 2017, a psychiatric journal published results of a study showing 1 in 8 American adults met diagnostic criteria for alcoholism.

The opioid epidemic has ravaged huge parts of the country, too. The crack epidemic of the 1980s and early 1990s was seen, fairly or otherwise, as a problem primarily affecting Black urban neighborhoods. Not so with opioids, which cross every conceivable line in American life. The prevalence of drug and alcohol issues has apparently contributed to a transcendence of partisanship, too.

Back in the days of the 2016 Republican presidential primary, leading contenders for the nomination, including Sen. Ted Cruz (Texas), former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush and then-candidate Donald Trump, talked about family traumas related to alcohol or substance abuse — presumably to show empathy toward others struggling with similar issues.

Congress even has a bipartisan Addiction, Treatment and Recovery Caucus, co-chaired by Rep. Tim Ryan (D-Ohio) and Rep. David McKinley (R-W.Va.). The caucus has noted that U.S. opioid deaths have recently surpassed 30,000 per year for the first time — and that substance abuse in total is estimated to cost the nation about \$600 billion.

Larry Sabato of the University of Virginia Center for Politics said, regarding substance abuse generally, that it was "now so widespread that it's hard to see how there could be prejudice around it."

Sabato also recalled just how much the media's treatment of such subjects has changed.

In writing his 1991 book, "Feeding Frenzy," about attempts to discredit politicians over issues of personal behavior, he spoke to a number of veteran journalists of an earlier generation.

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# CONFIDENTIAL / NOT TO BE DISTRIBUTED OR USED OUTSIDE THIS LITIGATION The Memo: Hunter Biden and the politics of addiction

They told stories “of members of the Senate stumbling completely dead-drunk into the Senate during proceedings,” he recalled. “The press gallery was right there. And not one person reported on it because that was the informal rule — you didn’t report extramarital affairs, you didn’t report binges on liquor.”

Mary Bono says that during her time on Capitol Hill, she and her colleague Rep. Hal Rogers (R-Ky.), were “the first to raise the issue [of addiction] and even in Congress there was this attitude that it was hush-hush — ‘We don’t talk about that.’”

That kind of complicit silence may also have been rooted in the idea that addiction was a moral failure. The legacy of that attitude is still around, according to experts, but it is at least fading.

Addiction “is not a moral failing, it is an alteration in the pathway of the brain and its reward system, and we know that for a fact,” said professor Gail D’Onofrio, the chair of emergency medicine at the Yale School of Medicine and an expert in addiction. “We have very evidence-based treatments that work and we also know the consequences of inaction, particularly around opioid use disorder — of people who present with a non-fatal overdose, approximately 5 percent will be dead within one year.”

There is still a long road to be traveled. Patrick Kennedy asserts that the nation is still way behind when it comes to integrating mental health into health care overall. Too often, he says, mental health care is underfunded and seen as a whole separate entity from physical care.

But, even with those caveats, no one really doubts that candor on the issue is a welcome step toward properly addressing it.

“The more we can get the word out that [addiction] is a disease and is very treatable, the better it will be for everyone — including the individual,” said D’Onofrio.

*The Memo is a reported column by Niall Stanage.*

RHB00232



# Beau Friedlander Hunter Biden's book 'Beautiful Things' pairs a wrenching tale of grief with a trite addict's diary

Don't look to the memoir of the president's son for any real political revelations. But also don't look to it for inspiration for your own sobriety.

I have a soft spot for people who have spent time scrounging around for a rogue shard of crack, found it, and stuck it in a pipe only to realize they were smoking a bit of Parmesan cheese. And so, after reading his memoir, "Beautiful Things," I have a soft spot for Hunter Biden.

There are three things you should know about this crackocalyptic memoir: First, there are moments of great beauty and tenderness; second, that it is an interesting keyhole into the president's family life; and third, you may not want to ask Hunter for advice on how to get sober.

"Beautiful Things" is an eye-popping "drunkalog," AA-speak for the alcoholic's origin story in which people tell, in a nutshell, what it was like, what happened and what it's like now. The goal of these stories is to show newcomers that they, too, can get sober, and to talk a bit about specific solutions to the drinking problem.

The back cover of "Beautiful Things" features four blurbs, including contributions by Stephen King (recovered alcoholic), Anne Lamott (recovered alcoholic) and Bill Clegg (recovered alcoholic and addict), which gush about Hunter's vivid accounts and his raw honesty. But conspicuously absent is that unmistakable sense of gratitude a person in recovery feels when confronted by a story that challenges and inspires them to not only hold on to the true north of their recovery, but also expands their sense of why sobriety matters.

*While Hunter Biden very clearly states that AA wasn't for him, it does work for many people.*

In "Beautiful Things," the jailhouse of addiction is always on the horizon. The happy, joyous and free part that sober alcoholics like to talk about — well, not so much.

Hunter's story includes some familiar elements (a history of family members who "couldn't handle their liquor") and the usual cast of characters that inhabit a rich addict's world — crooked drug dealers, soft-hearted bartenders, strippers, a couple Samoan gangsters — as well as his neat-freak crackhead roommate whom he calls Rhea. She weighs "85 pounds soaking wet," and feels like a character from the cutting room floor of "The Wire."

It also has Hunter in stints at fancy rehabs, on recovery trips spent on synthetic ayahuasca in Tijuana, Mexico, cooking crack at the trendy Chateau Marmont in Los Angeles, and hiding out in mildewy motel rooms along the I-95 corridor. There are con jobs, unanswered calls from the future president, a smattering of interventions, supposedly curative Ketamine infusions and that recovery cure-all, yoga. The sheer volume of catastrophe and dysfunction is turned up to "movie deal" volume, which is where the rubber left the literary road for me.

*While there's no right way to get sober, "Beautiful Things" ends in what feels like a cliffhanger.*

It's too bad, because the first part of the book is so evocative I'd like to read it again. A vivid world is summoned in those pages — a narrative that weaves alcoholism and addiction into the heartbreaking experiences of loss and grief of both the Biden family and Joe's first wife's (Hunter's mother's) family. And that narrative did what it was designed to do — lead the reader to a trapdoor. That's the one that opened under Hunter when his brother, Beau Biden, died.

The road accident that killed Hunter's mother and sister is followed by a filigreed account of the days leading to Beau's death. Beau emerges as a devoted sibling, shepherding Hunter to AA meetings and rehabs, always there, a forever best friend. As Hunter writes, "Beau left a hole that was hard to fill."

But in the last few chapters in the book, Hunter suddenly fills it. In the middle of a crack binge, having not slept for days, a random couple at a pool decides he just has to meet their friend Melissa. Two decades younger, Melissa tells Hunter he is no longer a crack addict on their very first date. She commences to erase most of the contacts in his phone and commandeers his computer. Just days later, he proposes marriage

And that's it — show's over folks; there is no third act. Melissa talks to the Democratic presidential nominee on the phone, who thanks her for helping his son find love once again — which apparently is all Hunter needed to stay sober. Smash cut to credits.

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In late-stage addiction, the odds of falling in love are pretty good — but the goods are usually fairly odd. While there's no right way to get sober, "Beautiful Things" ends in what feels like a cliffhanger. Full disclosure: I've been clean and sober for almost 13 years. The story about how bad things got and what I do to stay sober includes things my kids don't need to know about yet. There are many near-relapses — including a time around year eight when I allowed a lover to replace my program of recovery. It includes staying sober after my sister committed suicide. Getting through it sober is the El Dorado here. And my sobriety is a commodity — something I can point to when someone else I know is having a hard time staying sober. It's how we do it.

*What's missing in this beautiful wreck of a drunkalog is the rotating, ever-present cast of other characters in recovery.*

People are pretty open about being in AA these days, even though it's still against the traditions in Twelve Step recovery programs. The basic reason is that no one represents AA; the group exists to help people get clean and sober. One of the many reasons AA's "maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films" is because if you say you went to AA and then you get drunk, people will think it doesn't work.

And while Hunter very clearly states that AA wasn't for him, it does work for many people. And as every sponsor in AA says when talking to a newcomer who has an easier way than AA to get sober but keeps relapsing: "How's that working out for you?"

What's missing in this beautiful wreck of a drunkalog is the rotating, ever-present cast of other characters in recovery, helping Hunter help them and, with that, letting Hunter help himself stay sober. Hunter's solution — relying on first Beau and then Melissa — is too fragile for the rough road people in recovery have to travel every day.

Our stories are our most valuable possessions; they have powers, like amulets, to ward off trouble and serve as guideposts for others. Hunter's story is powerful. At some point, he will achieve a lasting sobriety, and make it his True North — or, like too many of us, he'll die trying. I hope that doesn't happen, because this book makes clear Hunter Biden has a lot to offer.

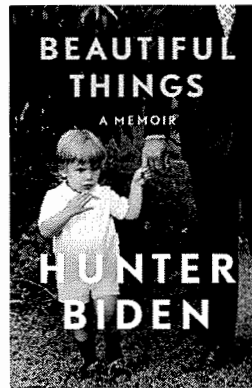
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**The New York Times**

## ***15 New Books to Watch For in April***



**'Beautiful Things: A Memoir,' by Hunter Biden (Gallery Books, April 6)**

Biden's younger son tells his story of addiction and sobriety — and the relentless scrutiny of growing up in the public eye. He doesn't hold back details of his family life, including his relationship with his older brother's widow, is candid about his lowest lows and offers a peek at his life in Los Angeles, with a new wife and young child.

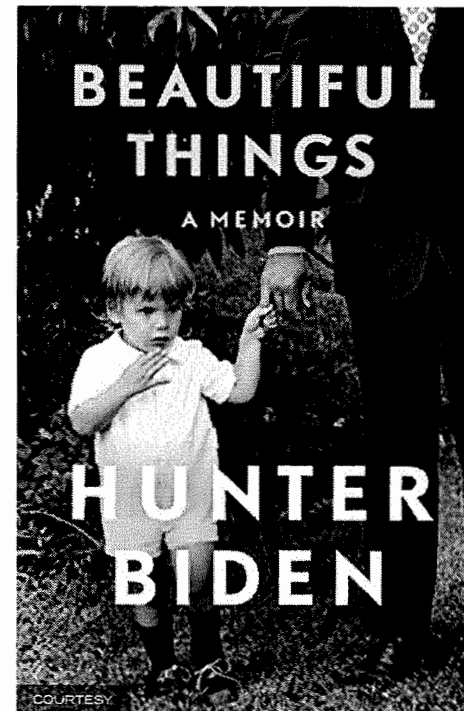
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**TOWN&COUNTRY**

The Best Books to Read This April



1

## Beautiful Things: A Memoir

Gallery Books  
[amazon.com](https://amazon.com)

[SHOP NOW](#)

Much has been made of the life and times of Hunter Biden, the son of the president. He's survived hardship and loss and experienced addiction and the harsh glare of the spotlight. In this anticipated memoir, Biden shares his own take on the events that have shaped his life—the car crash he survived but which killed his mother and younger sister, the death of his brother Beau, substance abuse—and shares a portrait of himself today (sober, married, a new father) that is ultimately a testament to survival.

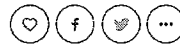
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# Entertainment WEEKLY

## The best new books to read in April

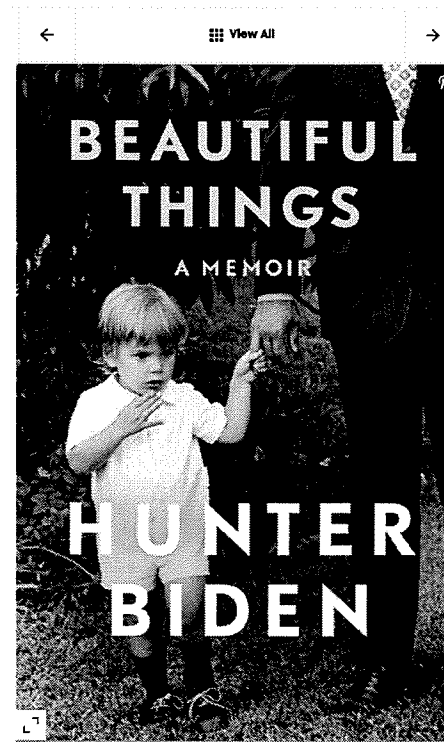
By [Selja Rankin](#) March 31, 2021 at 08:27 PM EDT



7 of 18

### ***Beautiful Things*, by Hunter Biden**

Widely reported moments — the deadly childhood car accident, the loss of older brother Beau, and his descent into addiction — become even more crushing when told in Hunter Biden's own words for his first memoir, but the equally notable happy ending thankfully offers a reprieve. (April 6)



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# Exhibit 611

119

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## Podcasts

RHB00238



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## Through Decades Of Addiction, Hunter Biden Says His Family Never Gave Up On Him



7-Minute Listen

+ PLAYLIST



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**EPISODE 1215** APRIL 4, 2021

# Hunter Biden

Marc only knew Hunter Biden from what he saw in the news. He never heard him speak, he had no sense of who he really was, and he wasn't sure he cared much about the troubled son of a President. Then he read Hunter Biden's book. The sad, tragic, honest, disturbing and concerning story at the heart of the real Hunter Biden made Marc want to talk with him, face to face. Hunter and Marc have a conversation about grief, desperation, tragedy, trouble and deep drug addiction. It ends up in a good place, but that place is fragile.

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## In This Episode

President Biden prepares to roll out an ambitious agenda ahead of his first address to a Joint Session of Congress, the potential recall in California gets more attention now that Caitlyn Jenner has declared her candidacy for governor, and Republicans trot out some truly ridiculous arguments against D.C. statehood. Then, Tommy talks to Hunter Biden about his new book, *Beautiful Things*.

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INSIDE THE HIVE

## AN INTERVIEW WITH HUNTER BIDEN

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The president's son on addiction, his father, and why Don Jr. is so obsessed with him.

BY EMILY JANE FOX AND JOE HAGAN

MAY 7, 2021

On this week's episode of *Inside the Hive*, **Emily Jane Fox** sits down with the first son to talk about his addiction, his dad, what makes a Biden love story, and why he thinks the GOP, and **Don Jr.** in particular, are obsessed with him.

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## Hunter Biden on Burisma, Don Jr., and Cooking Crack! 📺

The New Abnormal

News Commentary

[Listen on Apple Podcasts ↗](#)



On a special edition of our hit podcast The New Abnormal, the president's son opens up to Molly Jong-Fast about ... well, about a lot. Why the Trumps continue to go after him so hard. Why his wife won't let him have a laptop. How easy it is to cook crack cocaine. How hard it is to live in fear of a relapse.

But Hunter Biden also gave some hard-to-swallow answers about the emails he traded with the bigwigs at energy companies in China and Ukraine—answers that could come back to haunt him. It's all part of an absolutely gripping episode that you absolutely have to hear.

If you haven't heard, every single week The New Abnormal does a special bonus episode for Beast Inside, the Daily Beast's membership program. where Sometimes we interview Senators like Cory Booker or the folks who explain our world in media like Jim Acosta or Soledad O'Brien. Sometimes we just have fun and talk to our favorite comedians and actors like Busy Phillips or Billy Eichner and sometimes its just discussing the fuckery. You can get all of our episodes in your favorite podcast app of choice by becoming a Beast Inside member where you'll support The Beast's fearless journalism. Plus! You'll also get full access to podcasts and articles. To become a member head to [newabnormal.thedailybeast.com](https://newabnormal.thedailybeast.com)

See [acast.com/privacy](https://acast.com/privacy) for privacy and opt-out information.

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# rehab confidential

JOE SCHRANK & AMY DRESNER

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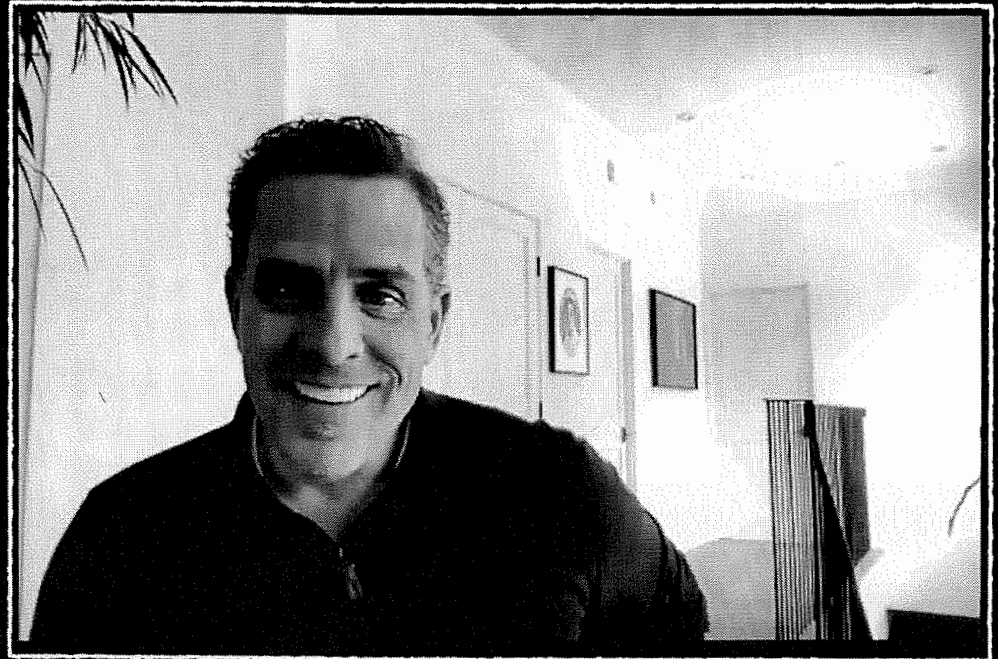


**TOUGH COOKIES**

# TOUGH COOKIES



**STARRING LOW CUT CONNIE**



**SPECIAL GUEST: HUNTER BIDEN**

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**TBC – On Brand with Donny Deutsch**

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# Exhibit 612



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## International Press

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## Canada

The  
**Current**  
with Matt Galloway



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## United Kingdom



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## United Kingdom



### The President's Son An Interview with Hunter Biden

Home



BBC  
RADIO



# TODAY

### Hunter Biden opens up about drug and alcohol addiction to the Today Programme

The son of US President Joe Biden addressed the controversies that  
have surrounded him.

06 April 2021  
🕒 35 minutes

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BBC  
RADIO 1

### Hunter Biden on addiction: My life is not a tabloid

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# THE TIMES THE SUNDAY TIMES

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This frank, chaotic, self-justifying memoir from Joe Biden's son is mesmerising

## Sizzling mess of grief and drugs

### MEMOIR

Josh Glancy

*Beautiful Things* A Memoir by Hunter Biden  
Gallery UK £20 pp272

This memoir. Holy hell. I knew going in that President Biden's son was a crack addict and an alcoholic. I knew he had an affair with his beloved brother's widow. I knew he had impregnated a stripper whom he met in a Washington strip club. I knew that his life had been marked by profound tragedy, losing his mother and sister in a horrifying car crash. But to read all these things in the memoir of a sitting president's son was mesmerising. This book is a sizzling mess of grief, addiction, self-justification and misdirection. It's admirable – and also abominable.

In December 1972, just before Christmas, Neilia Biden collided with a tractor at an intersection in Hockessin, Delaware. She was killed along with her one-year-old daughter, Naomi. Her toddler sons, Hunter and Beau, survived. Hunter doesn't directly attribute his addiction struggles to that trauma but the connection is clear. "What was lost was never recovered," he writes.

While his father went off to build a career in the US

Senate, Hunter and Beau built an almost impossibly close fraternal bond. The relationship between the brothers is the one undeniably beautiful thing in this book, which at its best is a love letter to a lost soulmate. Inseparable throughout their lives, there was one crucial difference between the men: "I drank and Beau didn't."

Hunter had already propped up many a bar by the time Beau died from a brain tumour in 2015, aged 46, but

things went truly haywire once he lost his stalwart brother. By 2016 Hunter Biden had become Hunter S Thompson, moving his crack dealer, Rhea, into his Washington apartment. "I loved Rhea as much as I ever loved a friend," he muses.

Later that year he booked himself into one of many rehab sessions, at a retreat in the Arizona desert. But he missed his plane getting high in the airport car park and embarked on a cataclysmic solo road trip across America. This, he says, is when he gained his "PhD in crackology" as he was chased across the country by the "four horsemen of the crackocalypse" (yes, he actually writes that).

Constantly chasing his next high, Hunter acquired a "travelling band of vampires" who fed off his credit card and

his desperation. In his LA bungalow he learnt how to cook his own crack from an ex-skateboarder named Honda. Things got so bad at one point that a Samoan gangster pulled him aside and told him to get his act together. Yet still there's a strange braggadocio to Hunter's recollections. "Jin Morrison was a f\*\*\*ing

piker compared to my shenanigans," he says, boasting of his drug use. Then came the unnamed child with a stripper, which he glosses over coldly in one sentence as a "mess I've taken responsibility for", and the affair with Beau's widow, Hallie, which his own wife Kathleen discovered by reading an old iPad. Unmentioned is his alleged relationship with Hallie's sister, Elizabeth, which was said to have showed up in texts that were leaked during the election.

There's an important message buried in all this mayhem: the utter joylessness of addiction. The vodka is warm and unmixed, the fiends are nasty and vacuous, and the degradation of smoking cheddar popcorn debris in the hope it might be crack flakes is unforgettable.

The book does have a happy ending – Hunter finds redemption after a coup de foudre with his new wife, Melissa. But *Beautiful Things* glosses over many key issues.

## A brave Biden memoir – but why write it?

*BEAUTIFUL THINGS*  
by Hunter Biden

272PP, SIMON & SCHUSTER, £20, EBOOK £9.99



In an ideal world, this book would never have been written. The author more or less says so himself. By his account, Hunter Biden – father, lawyer, recovering addict – was dragged into the spotlight during the 2020 election purely because he was Joe Biden's son, and he's half right. Joe was always going to be vetted; Hunter's business dealings in Ukraine were always going to be examined.

But Trump supporters also dredged up Hunter's problems with drink and drugs, which was a low blow. Anyone who has had an addiction, or knows someone with one, will appreciate that the addict is not themselves: they cannot be judged for their actions. Hunter writes honestly and with courage

Joe Biden is a strangely distant figure, appearing rarely to provide tangible relief to his lost son. And while Hunter does discuss his controversial employment by Burisma, a Ukrainian gas firm, the scale of his involvement is carefully elided.

Why did Hunter write this chaotic memoir? Perhaps it's because he truly wants to face down his demons and rebuild his life, but the reported \$2 million advance may have played a more central role. Ultimately, for all its revelations, this book does not seem to be honest. I fear that more bumps still lie ahead. **E**

about the collapse of his marriage, hurting his father, squandering cash and going on a "crack-fuelled, cross-country odyssey". There is no Hunter S Thompson joy here. It's just sad.

The cause is obvious: Hunter is a man living with trauma in the shadow of his older brother. The two boys were in the back of the car, just toddlers, when Joe's first wife, Neilia, collided with another vehicle, killing her and their sister, Naomi. When Hunter woke up in hospital, his brother was in the next bed mouthing the words: "I love you, I love you. I love you."

"My father believed Beau could

one day be President," writes Hunter, "and that he'd get there with my help." That's not a vocation; it's an impression. Hunter evidently not only loved his brother but was in awe of him and a psychiatrist would no doubt conclude that, unable to meet such an insanely high standard, he cast himself as the lesser brother, the brother with flaws – a functioning alcoholic. In 2015, Beau died horribly of brain cancer, again an obvious trigger for Hunter's even worse turn towards drugs (it's particularly Freudian that he started dating

Beau's widow) and the author details Beau's treatment, his funeral, even his eulogies in an exercise of wall-to-wall name-dropping. "President Obama and his family" were at the service, "Bill and Hillary Clinton... and John McCain." We don't need to know this, any more than it's necessary for Hunter to inform us that the clinic he dried out in was founded by Eric Clapton.

I earned degrees from Yale Law and Georgetown," he writes. "I have been a senior executive of one of the country's largest financial

institutions... I travelled to refugee camps... I helped secure funding for mobile dental clinics." The message is rammed home again and again: the author is a good person, never as good as Beau, of course, but better than Trump painted him. Yet questions do remain.

How did a man who acknowledges that he was an utter train wreck retain such positions of status and influence? In one section, he describes taking a hiatus from the booze to fly to the Middle East to persuade King Abdullah II of Jordan to take in more refugees. Why? How on Earth did he command such responsibilities? "The only reason the King had agreed to

meet," he admits, "was out of respect for my dad. I guess you could chalk it up to nepotism, in the best possible way." Why was the Ukrainian-linked company Burisma paying him a five-figure salary each month – "funny money," to quote Hunter himself? "My last name was a coveted credential," he admits. As Joe Biden's son, privilege and access meant he was able to fall upwards, that regardless of his profound inadequacies, he could

that a writer lacks faith in his material when the text sounds like the blurb: "It's a Biden love story... which means it's complicated: tragic, humane, emotional, enduring, widely consequential, and ultimately redemptive."

Perhaps the intention of all of this is to shame the Trumps, in which case it's a non-starter. Gullit is a quality poor Hunter has in spades. The Trumps couldn't even spell it.

always call someone important and they'd be obliged to pick up. Meanwhile, Joe comes across as compassionate, undeniably, but also hyper-disciplined, obsessed with politics and not always entirely present. Intriguingly, he doesn't drink any more.

Some of the details of Joe's career are glossed over. He didn't pull out of the 1988 presidential primaries, as Hunter suggests, purely because he was accused of plagiarising Neil Kinnock: he was also accused of exaggerating his grades and his experience as an activist. We get the usual "my dad never questions other people's characters" guff but, on the contrary, it was under Biden's watch as chair of the senate judiciary committee that the nomination of Supreme Court justices became such an unpleasant, personalised process – what Clarence Thomas famously called "a high tech lynching". In 2012, he told a racially mixed crowd that Mitt Romney, the most inoffensive man on the planet, wanted to put them "back in chains". Joe can punch below the belt when he needs to.

I return to the mystery of the reasoning behind this book. It might have made sense as an attempt to quash the allegations against the Bidens during the election, but daddy is now president – so what's the point of it now? If the goal is to give us a timeless memoir of addiction, it is well written – occasionally harrowing – but other books are better, and Hunter's ability to cushion every mistake with money makes him a less than universal figure. You can always tell

To order a copy for £16.99, call 0844 871 1514 or visit books.telegraph.co.uk

Hunter's ability to cushion every mistake with money stops this story being universal

RHB00252



# THE TIMES

## A life of privilege, tragedy and crack addiction

**There is no self-pity in this touching memoir by President Biden's fatally flawed son, says Justin Webb**



**Beautiful Things**  
A Memoir  
by Hunter Biden  
Simon & Schuster,  
255pp; £20

**T**hey love each other. Boy, they do. Sweaty Irish-American love; between strutting powerful busy men. Love squeezed in between Navy Reserve duty and law school. Between running the nation and putting in a bathroom or stripping down a car. Brothers, fathers, sons. Big hugs. Women loved too, and kids — dozens of them. The kids scooped up and endlessly scooted from pillar to post to be loved some more: driven from house to compound and back across the vastness of the US where they run free and love each other. The guys grab each other. The women have to fend them off, or encourage them, or swap their affections from one guy to the next.

Hey, I'm an only child. I found Hunter Biden's memoir *Beautiful Things* dizzying. From afar it looks beguiling to those of us who are not blessed with all this love. But it makes you queasy too, and

genuinely confused about who is loving who and why.

But I digress. *Beautiful Things* is a beautiful book by Biden, the 51-year-old son of the president. It is a sharply written account of what it is like to be at the same time enormously privileged (the wealthy, Yale-educated son of an influential politician) and utterly wretched (addicted to drink and drugs). Nowhere is it mawkish or self-pitying.

Of course, if you think rich, well-connected people thoroughly deserve a bit of nastiness in their otherwise sweet-smelling lives, this is not the book for you. But if you are human, and humane, Hunter is speaking to you and asking, if not for forgiveness then for understanding.

Here is Hunter Biden's self-description: "I've bought crack cocaine on the streets of Washington, DC, and cooked up my own inside a hotel bungalow in Los Angeles. I've been so desperate for a drink that I couldn't make the one-block walk between a liquor store and my apartment without uncapping the bottle to take a swig. In the last five years alone, my two-decades-long marriage has dissolved, guns have been put in my face, and at one point I dropped clean off the grid, living in \$59-a-night Super 8 motels off I-95 while scaring my family even more than myself."

Why? Well — wisely — he blames no

one but himself and his demons.

He does suggest that the addiction impulse is abroad in the wider Biden clan, that's why his father doesn't drink. An entire family teeters on the brink of the same disasters as have befallen Hunter, right up to the boss, the man who is now the 46th president of the USA.

But of course there is more than genes at play here. There is the event when he was a tiny child, that changed his life, his father's and brother's lives, and ended the lives of his mother and sister in a car crash in Delaware in December, 1972:

"Suddenly, I see my mother's head turn to the right," he writes. "I don't remember anything else about her profile, her mouth. Her head simply swings." His mother, Neilia, and younger sister, Naomi, were killed. Hunter, aged two, was seriously injured, along with his older brother, Beau.

The next thing Hunter remembers is waking up in a hospital bed next to Beau: "He's mouthing three words to me, over and over: 'I love you. I love you. I love you.' That's our origin story."

As I say, there is no self-pity or justification attempted even when it would be perfectly understandable, perfectly explicable. "I want to make it clear: I don't see that tragic moment as necessarily resulting in behaviours that lent themselves to

addiction. That would be a cop-out."

Beau became, he says, "my best friend, my soul mate, and my polestar since those virtually first conscious moments of my life." Beau, who became attorney general of Delaware, rescued him from addiction, advised him on his life more generally, supported him and had fun with him. And then died of a brain tumour in 2015, aged 46.

Tragedy and suffering amid all that love. We know how Joe Biden coped with it all. We know that he went on to take his Senate seat in January 1973 and rebuild his life after the car crash. We know he coped with Beau's death but decided against running, a year later, in the presidential election against Donald Trump. What we also learn from *Beautiful Things* is that his living son caused him almost as much anguish as his dying son. Even when he was vice-president, Biden senior was trying to rescue Hunter from a life of degradation and abuse.

And all of this made worse by Trump, who seized on Hunter — a lawyer and lobbyist — as a potential route into his father's head. As Hunter puts it: "He pushed debunked conspiracy theories about work I did in Ukraine and China, even as his own children had pocketed millions in China and Russia and his former campaign manager sat in a jail cell for laundering millions more from Ukraine."

Debunked? I suppose so. Much of the Republican attack on Hunter comes from his laptop that was supposedly handed in to be repaired, and from which incriminating material was sent to the Trump campaign and thus to the intelligence agencies. Was Hunter, when he worked for a Ukrainian gas company called Burisma, channelling funds to his father's campaign? He says (and this is true) no investigation has concluded that he did "anything wrong, or that my father did anything wrong".

But it is also fair to say that investigations are still going on. The accusation feels unlikely, indeed it feels like a piece of deliberately placed nastiness, but we do not know for sure.

And the wider issue that Hunter fails to deal is why he was involved with Ukraine at all. He writes "there's no question my last name was a coveted credential", but rather than leaving it at that he makes the

somewhat farfetched claim that he also had the right experience for his board level role at Burisma. Basically, he needed the money (which he manfully admits) and sold his name.

Worse things have been done. And is the Biden family really open to charges of corruption on the same level as the Trumps? As the Fox News jingle goes: "You decide!"

This is not a particularly political book, but it's worth noting that Hunter's life of chemically induced euphoria is America's too. Look at the trial going on at the moment of the white policeman accused of murdering George Floyd. Both Floyd and his girlfriend were addicts. It's just part of the tableau of modern American life. Millions of Americans have been convinced that pills and booze and harder stuff will make life better.

You could argue that the Obamas were too squeaky clean to understand America's addiction problem. Perhaps Joe will. Perhaps Hunter's story might be deeply important because his father has seen all this horror close-up. Biden has shown more interest in spending government money in support of damaged Americans than any president since Jimmy Carter. Reading this book, you realise how close to the damage Joe Biden is.

I still worry for them all: for Hunter's three daughters, his ex-wife, for another woman with whom he had a child he didn't remember fathering, for the widow of his brother Beau with whom he had an affair, and for Melissa, to whom he is now married after declaring, the first time they met: "I know this probably isn't a good way to start a first date but I'm in love with you."

She laughed. Then said she was in love with him. Soon afterwards, he writes, they got married and she took away his phone, his wallet, his computer and his car keys.

OK. Perhaps this is how modern fairy stories end. Or perhaps not. I am genuinely sorry to be unconvinced — Hunter seems like a good guy with a whole host of problems — but it's difficult not to believe, at the end of *Beautiful Things*, that more ugliness is around the corner.

**Joe Biden's living son caused him almost**

**as much anguish as his dying son**

RHB00253

REVIEW

## Hunter Biden's Beautiful Things is a brave memoir of his 'crack-fuelled odyssey' – but why write it?

★★★★★ 2/5

This is a harrowing tale of trauma, sibling rivalry and addiction – but it's an odd moment to be striking back at the Trumps

By Tim Stanley  
9 42:00 PM - 9/4/2024

Related topics  
Joe Biden, US Elections, Hunter Biden, Biography

f b e s



In an ideal world, this book would never have been written. The author more-or-less says so himself. By his account, Hunter Biden – father, lawyer, recovering addict – was dragged into the spotlight during the 2020 election purely because he was Joe Biden's son, and he's half right. Joe was always going to be vetted; Hunter's businesses dealings in Ukraine were always going to be examined.

But Trump supporters also dredged up Hunter's problems with drink and drugs, which was a low blow. Anyone who has had an addiction, or knows someone with one, will appreciate that the addict is not themselves: they cannot be judged for their actions. Hunter writes honestly and with courage about the collapse of his marriage, hurting his father, squandering cash and going on a "crack-fuelled, cross-country odyssey". There is no Hunter S Thompson joy here. It's just sad.

The cause is obvious: Hunter is a man living with trauma in the shadow of his older brother. The two boys were in the back of the car, just toddlers, when Joe's first wife, Neilsa, collided with another vehicle, killing her and their sister, Naomi. When Hunter woke up in hospital, his brother was in the next bed mouthing the words "I love you. I love you. I love you."

"My father believed Beau could one day be President," writes Hunter, "and that he'd get there with my help." That's not a vocation; it's a burden. Hunter evidently not only loved his brother but was in awe of him and a psychiatrist would no doubt conclude that, unable to meet such an insatiable high standard, he cast himself as the lesser brother, the brother with flaws – a functioning alcoholic.

In 2015, Beau died horribly of brain cancer, again an obvious trigger for Hunter's even worse turn towards drugs. It's particularly Freudian that he started doing Beau's widow and the author details Beau's treatment, his funeral, even his eulogies in an exercise of wall-to-wall name-dropping. "President Obama and his family" were at the service, "Bill and Hillary Clinton... and John McCain." We don't need to know this, any more than it's necessary for Hunter to inform us that a clinic he dived out in was founded by Eric Clapton.

"I learned lessons from Yale Law and Georgetown," he writes. "I have been a member of the Ivy League and Georgetown's most prestigious financial institutions... I travelled to refugee camps... I helped secure funding for mobile dental clinics." The message is rammed home again and again: the author is a good person, never as good as Beau, of course, but better than Trump painted him. Yet questions remain.

How did a man who acknowledges that he was an utter train wreck retain such positions of status and influence? In one section, he describes taking a hiatus from the booze to fly to the Middle East to persuade King Abdullah II of Jordan to take in more refugees. Why? How on Earth did he command such responsibilities? "The only reason the King had agreed to meet," he admits, "was out of respect for my dad. I guess you could chalk it up to nepotism, in the best possible way." Why was the Ukrainian-linked company, Burisma, paying him a five figure salary each month – "funny money", to quote Hunter himself. "My last name was a coveted credential," he admits.

As Joe Biden's son, privilege and access meant he was able to fall upwards, that regardless of his profound inadequacies, he could always call someone important and they'd be obliged to pick up. Meanwhile, Joe comes across as compassionate, undeniably, but also hyper-disciplined and obsessed with politics. Intriguingly, he doesn't drink any more.



Some of the details of Joe's career are glossed over. He didn't pull out of the 1988 presidential primaries, as Hunter suggests, purely because he was accused of plagiarising Neil Kinnock: he was also accused of exaggerating his grades and his experience as an activist. We get the usual "my dad never questions other people's characters" guff but, on the contrary, it was under Biden's watch as chair of the senate judiciary committee that the nomination of Supreme Court justices became such an unpleasant, personalised process – what Clarence Thomas famously called "a high-tech lynching". In 2012, he told a racially mixed crowd that Mitt Romney, the most inoffensive man on the planet, wanted to put them "back in chains". Joe can punch below the belt when he needs to.

I return to the mystery of the reasoning behind this book. It might have made sense as an attempt to quash the allegations against the Bidens during the election, but daddy won the White House – so what's the point of it now? If the goal is to give us a timeless memoir of addiction, it is well-written – occasionally harrowing – but other books are better, and Hunter's ability to cushion every mistake with money makes him a less than universal figure. You can always tell that a writer lacks faith in his material when the text sounds like the blurb: "It's a Biden love story... which means it's complicated, tragic, humane, emotional, enduring, widely consequential, and ultimately redemptive."

Perhaps the intention of all of this is to shame the Trumps, in which case it's a non-starter. Guilt is a quality poor Hunter has in spades. The Trumps couldn't even spell it.

Beautiful Things by Hunter Biden is published by Simon & Schuster at £20. To order your copy for £16.99, visit Telegraph Books

RHB00254

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# The Observer

Memoir

## Here comes the son

Joe Biden's guilt-ridden boy relates his life of excess in detail, but sadly lacks any self-awareness, writes *Peter Conrad*

**Beautiful Things**

Hunter Biden  
Gallery UK, £20, pp272

In 1988, Joe Biden began his dogged quest for the presidency with the first of three campaigns to become his party's nominee and in the same year his teenage son Hunter set off on an erratic career of his own. Over the ensuing decades, as Joe's presidential prospects rose and fell, Hunter unstopably reeled from schoolboy rowdiness to drunken adolescence and then from divorce to drug addiction, before ending in bacchanalian revels at sleazy motels in the company of pimps and sex workers. Along the way, surprisingly, he also found time for an interlude of richly remunerated nepotism on the board of the Ukrainian energy company Burisma.

Here are two different approaches to the pursuit of American happiness: the father inched slowly towards a remote goal, while the son demanded instant gratification, spent money recklessly and went on a supposedly liberating downhill race to ruin. "I kept climbing the escalator," Hunter complains when remembering his early success as a corporate lawyer, "and didn't know how to get off." Binge-buzzing and crack cocaine were his blissful release from promotion. Now that Joe Biden finally has the job he always coveted, his most urgent task is to restore the moral health of a sick society; Hunter heads the queue of those needing rehabilitation.

Hunter's problem is the guilt that illogically afflicts the survivors of disaster. In 1972, he emerged

inert from a car crash that killed his mother and infant sister and left his adored older brother, Beau, with numerous injuries. Then in 2015, mortified by his own helplessness, he watched as Beau, the family's dynastic hope, seen as a future senator or president, died from an agonising brain cancer. After the funeral, Hunter began an affair with Beau's widow, Halle, which redefined adultery as an exercise in commiseration; when this ill-advised liaison fell apart, he lunged into four years of what he correctly labels "depravity".

Thinking perhaps of JFK in the Dallas motorcade, Hunter says that the deaths of his mother and brother were a "public tragedy". It's an oddly ostentatious way of looking at the family's terrible losses; by contrast, Hunter's own tragedy is private, though he has chosen to flagrantly publicise it. Self-obsessed without being self-aware, he says that he was "terrorised" by alcohol, as if he deserves sympathy because al-Qaida

had targeted him. Elsewhere, far from playing the victim, he brags that his intake of vodka and crack was "astounding" – even death-defying – and he has the cheek to claim that he accepted \$80,000 a month from Burisma because the money allowed him to spend extra time caring for the stricken Beau.

Anonymous shacked up with a loopy female drug dealer during his father's vice-presidency, Hunter describes his self-ostracism as a form of suicide. On a bender in LA in 2018, he consorts with Samoan gangsters, prowls through feld encampments of tents on the

downtown streets and feels he is surrendering to a death wish. Still, despite his best efforts, he did not manage to destroy himself and degradation hardly dented his innate sense of privilege. As he cruises around Nashville before dawn in his Porsche in search of drugs, he

smirks that the homeless loiterers in alleys take him for an off-duty cop. He is startled by the penitential domestic regime at a clinic in Antigua where he undergoes one of many ineffectual cures: "Everybody makes his own bed, does his own laundry," he reports. Dude, so do I, and I'm not being detoxed.

Hunter's writing can be mawkish, especially when he is differentiating between "Mommy" (his dead mother), "Mow" (his stepmother, Joe's second wife) and "Mom-Mom" (his granny). The book's title refers to the "beautiful things" he and Beau aspired to do when they got round to "making the world a better place", but Hunter's narrative is mostly grim and squalid. "There was no fucking poetry to it at all," he remarks after a nervy transaction in the slums.

At another point, he buys recycled urine so he can cheat on a drug test. Nevertheless, episodes of delirious lyricism do occur. Driving while doped, Hunter is guided along a perilous mountain road in Arizona by a phantasmal barn owl, while he transforms the Hollywood hills into where coyotes howl and nocturnal birds screech maledictions.

Because the Bidens are devout Catholics, Hunter's book is a confession and an act of contrition. His father, who currently wields

the pardon power that Trump so immorally abused, cannot offer absolution, but instead he dispenses the nostrum of empathy, much prized in America after four years of Trump's callous rancour. Yet the religious reassurance falters: drink and drugs give Hunter a more immediate access to paradise. Early on, he recites a Hail Mary in the hope that Beau's cancer will miraculously disappear, then scoffs at this "makeshift altar to the mystical". Later, waiting woozily aloft, he rebuilds the altar. Crack smokers, he says, have a "sacramental routine", with pipes and scouring pads to replace the chalices and consecrated saucers used in the mass; the high derived from the initial puff is "a 'bell ringer' – crack's holy grail".

Hunter has recently been redeemed by the love of his new wife, Melissa, who put a stop to those profane ecstasies. Intriguingly, she first captivated him when he noticed that she had the same blue eyes as Beau. He doesn't say whether Melissa measured up in other respects – his brother, he insists, had "the longest eyelashes" and "great hair" – but he married her anyway, a week after they met. Announcing his salvation, Hunter also grandly agrees to accept "the existential obligations of being a great man's son". Well, that's a relief. Now all that Joe has to do is save America.

To order *Beautiful Things: A Memoir* for £17.60 go to [guardianbookshop.com](http://guardianbookshop.com) or call 020-3176 3837



ABOVE: Hunter (right) and brother Beau with their father on his 30th birthday, November 1972. Bettmann Archive/Getty

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# Evening Standard

## The President's son laid bare

Devastating loss, an all-consuming crack addiction and what he really thinks of his father Joe — Hunter Biden doesn't hold back. **Nick Curtis** digests the memoir that has shocked the US Capitol

**T**HE weirdest of many weird passages in *Beautiful Things*, the confessional memoir of Joe Biden's tormented son Hunter, begins in October 2016, when he books into a wellness ranch in Sonoma for addiction to alcohol and crack cocaine. Arriving at Dulles airport in Washington at 7am the sometime lawyer and lobbyist misses flight after flight smoking rocks in his car, then drives 651 miles overnight to Nashville where he buys crack on the streets.

After three zonked days he makes it to Los Angeles but misses a connecting flight because he leaves the terminal to smoke crack, and ends up on a six-day bender. At one point he's talked out of a fight by a giant called Little Down who is "related to the Boo-Yaa T.R.I.B.E.' of Samoan gangster rappers."

Hunter then rents a car for the 500-mile journey to Sonoma, almost kills himself running it off the freeway, hires a jeep, and drives the wrong way for two hours. "At some point the crack lost its oomph, but I kept lighting up anyway, out of force of habit," he writes, matter-of-factly. For some miles he follows a giant owl in his headlights. After checking in to not one but two spas and tapering off the crack, Hunter calls Hallie, the widow of his adored brother Beau — who died of a brain tumour 17 months earlier — to fetch him. By the time they get back to Delaware "we were a couple". Kathleen, his long-suffering wife and mother of his three daughters, discovers their

text exchanges. "Everything blew up after that," Hunter sighs.

You can see why Donald Trump, with his instinct for an opponent's tender parts, targeted Hunter when fighting Joe Biden for the presidency. If the Bidens echo the Kennedys in some ways — Catholic, close, marked by tragedy and driven by a sense of political entitlement — then Hunter is Ted: the one whose lapses reveal the base desires beneath the mask of American nobility.

But Hunter spiked Trump's guns with a tell-all New Yorker article about his addictions, shortly after his dad announced his candidacy. The *Make America Great Again* crowd were left with vague allegations about Hunter's lucrative seat on the board of Ukrainian energy company Burisma, and a phantom laptop supposed to contain horrors. This book puts it all out there again, in greater detail, to pre-empt those gunning for his father in office. It is

very frank but also prone to tip into bathos ("politics is not the family business — service is"). It is a barely believable story of redemption, in which a fragile man whose life is punctuated by

loss is saved by the right woman (spoiler alert: it's not Hallie). It also tells you an awful lot about crack.

### American tragedy

On December 18, 1982 Hunter, aged two, and Beau, three, were severely injured in a car accident that killed their mother and baby sister. Aunts, uncles, and grandparents pitched in alongside their grieving, loving father. Five years later teacher Jill Jacobs became their "mom" and gave them a step sister, Ashley.

The Bidens seem taciturn — there is lots of hugging and kissing — but their verbal exchanges rarely go beyond declarations of love or exhortations to be the best you can be. The bereavement is never discussed. The family gathers again to switch off Beau's life support on May 29, 2015. Hunter does not show his father his eulogy for Beau before the funeral; later, he will not tell his father, the presidential candidate, about his New Yorker interview.

### My brother's keeper

Hunter takes his first drink at eight, and has his first hangover at 14. Beau waits until he's 21 and legal, and quits booze at 30. Hunter marries Kathleen, whom he meets through Jesuit volunteerism groups while studying in Chi-

cago, after she falls pregnant. Both brothers study law and go on to lead different lives; Beau becoming attor-

ney general of Delaware and serving as a major in the 261st Signal Brigade in Iraq and Hunter working for a bank then a lobbyist and adviser to investment funds. He is discharged from the US Navy Reserve in 2014 after failing a drug test, having already been busted for cocaine possession in high school. Yet the boys remain close. The book's title refers to the "beautiful things" they hoped to see and do together.

### The business of politics

Joe Biden hovers over the book as a strict but affectionate working man who strips asbestos from the pipes of the family home himself, and whose office just happens to be the Senate. The family unconditionally support each other's chosen paths, but again, they don't talk.

Joe apparently doesn't ask Hunter about his lobbying clients; Hunter doesn't tell. When dad becomes vice-president, Hunter has to quit lobbying so becomes an adviser to investors. His appointment to the Burisma board in 2014 catapults him into "grey" areas of international business — where people are hired for influence or as reputational fig-leaves — and subsequently into the front line of the Trump/Putin disinformation wars. The whole business is covered in defensive, stultifying detail in chapter eight. What's important is that when Hunter, a functional alcoholic since 2003, descends into hardcore drug addiction after Beau's death, and begins

to lose work, the Burisma money enables him to buy crack.

### Overcoming addiction

Crack strips Hunter of shame. It's normal, he explains, to offer a stranger \$100 to buy crack for you. It's normal to have guns pointed at you. It's normal to have

a sick, elderly, female crack addict move into your apartment because she's a secure route to a fix, and "borrowers" rather than steals your credit cards. It's normal to smoke bits of parmesan in the hope they are spilled crumbs of crack.

While excoriating his past, Hunter seems oddly proud of his ability to find crack in any city he might find himself, and of his capacity for intoxication while at the Chateau Marmont, compared with previous resident, Doors vocalist Jim Morrison. "Morrison was a P\*ting piker compared to my shenanigans." Indeed, after years of abuse — even some of his rehab sessions involved psychoactives and "ketamine infusions" — it's astonishing that Hunter has retained his capacity to function, and his looks.

### The saviour

Hunter paints his now ex-wife as angry and the relationship with his sister-in-law as an aberration. His current, clean state is entirely down to his second wife Melissa Cohen, a South African activist. Their improbable courtship is the second weirdest part of the book. Given her number by a stranger, a totally wasted Hunter texts her after midnight. She bats him off but meets him for a \$35 dinner the next day (he wears a "Canadian tuxedo": a denim jacket and jeans). He's 49. She's 32. The first thing he says is that her blue eyes are exactly like Beau's; the second, that he loves her. An hour later, she says she loves him. He admits he's a crack addict. She says: "Well, not anymore." They go to a party. He sneaks off, smokes crack, conks out. But Melissa takes charge of his phone, computer and wallet, polices his every bathroom visit, and faces down the hoodlums and whores who come after him. He gets clean. Weeks later they have a quickie wedding.

Typically, Hunter doesn't tell his dad until the morning of the ceremony. But he and Melissa do furnish Joe with a baby grandson to hoik aloft, Lion King-style, after his victory speech as president-elect. His name? Beau.

It's normal for him to smoke bits of parmesan in the hope that they are spilled crumbs of crack

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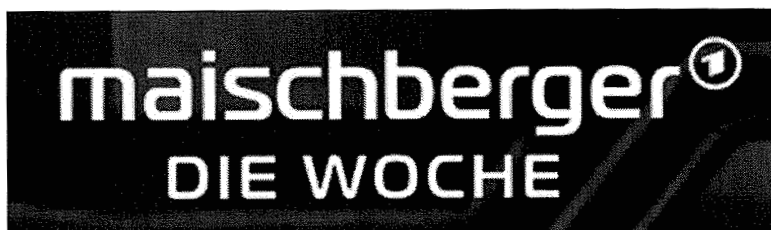
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## Germany

*Abendzeitung*



**KLEINE  
ZEITUNG**

**der Freitag**  
Die Wochenzeitung

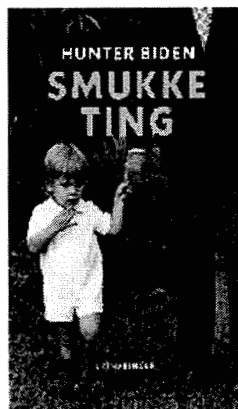


**WELT**



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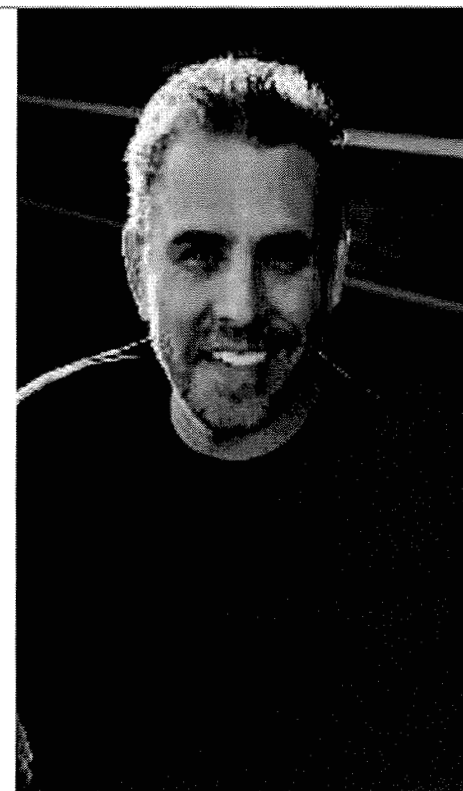
#### BIOGRAFI

### Hunter Biden skriver om misbrug, sorg – og far

'Jeg kommer fra en familie, der er blevet formet af tragedier og forbundet af en helt usædvanlig og ubrydelig kærlighed'. Sådan skriver Hunter Biden, søn af USA's præsident, Joe Biden, i selvbiografien "Smukke ting" (Politikens Forlag). Den 51-årige jurist fortæller åbent i bogen om det stof- og alkoholmisbrug, der i mange år styrede hans liv, om at vokse op i skyggen af en mor og en lillesøster, som omkom i en trafikulykke, da han kun var to år, om storebroren Beaus kræftsygdom og død i 2015 og om forholdet til faren Joe, som gennem alle årene har stået som en klippe i hans liv.

### MISBRUG OG KÆRLIGHED

● Joe Bidens søn, HUNTER BIDEN, blev ufrivilligt et omdrejningspunkt i efterårets valgkamp i USA, hovedsageligt på grund af sit mangeårige stof- og alkoholmisbrug. Nu fortæller han selv sin historie i bogen "Smukke ting", der er en gribende fortælling om ubærlige tragedier og stor kærlighed. Hunter Biden mistede som ganske lille sin mor og søster i et biluheld, og for fire år siden også sin storebror, Beau, der døde af kræft. Tragedier, der fik hans misbrug til at eskalere, men også skabte et ubrydeligt kærlighedsbånd til ikke mindst hans far.



**HUNTER BIDEN: Smukke ting.**  
**Udkommer tirsdag på Politikens**  
**Forlag, 299,95 kr.**



### En familie formet af tragedier

... sådan beskriver Hunter Biden det selv i den erindringsbog, der nu udkommer på dansk. Det er en fortælling om at vokse op i skyggen af amerikansk politik. Om at opleve stor sorg og synke ned i et altfortærende misbrug. Om at blive skydeskive for en smædekampagne. Men det er også historien om at rejse sig igen takket være kærligheden fra de allernærmeste – især faderen, Joe Biden.

*Hunter Biden: Smukke ting, Politikens Forlag, 300 kr.*

### Kvindeliv og hemmeligheder

Da Sigrid er i gang med at rydde op i sit hus for at gøre sig

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## Agenda

## BIOGRAFI

Hunter Biden skriver om misbrug, sorg  
og fars betingelsesløse kærlighed

'Jeg kommer fra en familie, der er blevet formet af tragedier og forbundet af en helt usædvanlig og ubrydelig kærlighed'. Sådan skriver Hunter Biden, søn af USA's præsident, Joe Biden, i selvbibliografien 'Smukke ting', som udkom 6. april i både Danmark og USA. Den 51-årige jurist fortæller åbent i bogen om det stof- og alkoholmisbrug, der i mange år styrede hans liv, om at vokse op i skyggen af en mor og en lillesøster, som omkom i en trafikulykke, da han kun var to år, om storebroren Beaus kræftsygdom og død i 2015 og om forholdet til faren Joe, som gennem alle årene har stået som en klippe i hans liv.

*Hunter Biden: Smukke ting, Politikens Forlag, 300 kr.*

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8

BERLINGSKE  
3. SEKTION ONSDAG 7. APRIL 2021

Hunter Biden er den viltre  
dråbe i pænhedens ocean

Smukke ting  
★★★★☆

Forfatter: Hunter Biden, Oversat af: Jakob Levinson, Forlag: Politikens Forlag.  
Sider: 280 Pris: 300 kr.

**Ad Birgitte Borup** [bibo@berlingske.dk](mailto:bibo@berlingske.dk)

**H**unter Biden tog sit første skridt i medietuen som etrækk. Dengang længe før han blev verdensberømt som skandaleramt politiker, da han sit første glas champagne, senere fulgte slægtens med al, belevede kaffes og et cracknibrug, der forlangte ville efterladt ham et sted i den amerikanske desuden, hvis han ikke havde været en Biden. Men det er han, TV al overflod, fristes m til at konstatere.

Hunter Biden er blevet berømt på at være en kontrastfigur til sit eget efternavn. Han er nemlig al den ustryklighed, der gør politiske familier til tabloidsfordøjstof. Han er den vildeste i pænderens ocean, pletten på den bløde dag, det udslyngede, strækker sig ud, sorte får i evigt ankløbet mod afgrunden. Det er netop modsætningen mellem Hunter Bidens efternavn og hans sølle liv på afgrænsede tundra, der gør erindringsbøger om slukke ting værd at læse.

Enhver, der har beskæftiget sig med USAs nuværende præsident, ved, hvordan tragedierne har forømt Biden-familien. Første gang, da Joe Bidens første hustru, Neila, og parrets lille datter døde i en trafikulykke, som sønnerne, troldste Hunter og troldste Beau, overlevede.

Anden gang, da Beau - familiens begavede stolthed, der var udsat til at videreføre det politiske Biden - dynasti - døde som 45-årig af en blodmangel.

hjemstamoz.

Efter at have tænksomt tinge står det lysende klart, at den tredje tragedie i Livs- hændelse blot er paracrithos værk. Hunter liden lægger sit misbrug frem i al den smagt og vælde, det fik - særligt til erfare broderens død, Resultat var kun bars stats og efter- nærmelse, som ham væk fra den kommer- ciale, men han turnerede på hoteller, der som regel smed han ud efter nogle dages ven- nens rundt. Her brugte han dagene på druk og stoffer, på at kravle rundt på gulvtæpper og ledte efter de stumper af crack, han kunne finde, for så endelig ud, at han var i færd med at ryge gamle stykker af parmesanost og pop- corn. De forsøg på hjælp til afvænning, der løbende kom fra familien, parerede han.

**Indledte et forhold til svigerinde**  
Skandalerne kom rullende. Han blev spyldt ud fra en ansættelse i flåden på grund af kokainmisbrug, og han indledte et forhold til sin brors

enke, der ramte forsliden af alverdens medier. Han gjorde også en stripper gravid og vedstod sig først faderskab, da hun fødte ham i retten og fik en DNA-test. Sidst nævnte springer han let og elegant henover i bogen, hvor faderskabsskandalen kun leveres en hurtig sløbebemærkning på side 248 om, at »han ikke husker at have mødt kvindene.

Så let springer han rods alt ikke hen over Burisma-affæren, der blev den direkte årsag til den første fretrækselse med Donald Trump. I ugen siden blev 1204 bekræftelser medført for det ukrainske naturgaselskab Burisma, veldømt, at hans far, der dengang var vicepræsident, var Obamas regerings kontakt til Ukraine. I 1993 hughede daværende præsident Trump blod og forsøgte at udsnylte Bidas ukrainske forbindelser i et uventet udsagn om telefonskema med den ukrainske præsident Zelensky. Demokraternes forsøgte efterfølgende forgeses af G Trump dømt ved en retsprøve, men lise flidens troværdighed led også

Men Hunter Siden fortryder intet. Bogen tjener mest som en hvidvaskning af den tvivlsom-

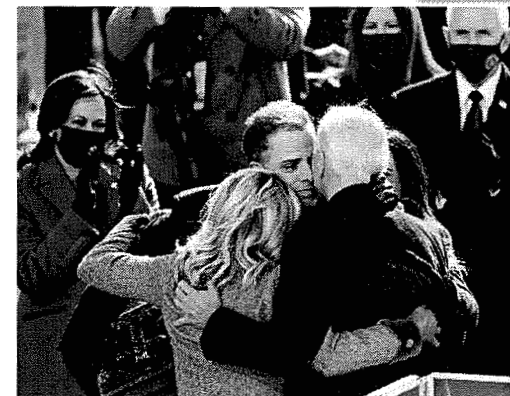
me afale, der sikrede ham 50.000 dollar om ru'nd'en. Vi trå på den ene side først, at han var kvalificeret til posten, og det var s'et efterhvert, men på den anden side, at det svar en fuckinger til russierne at have en bil'en siddende i bestyrrelsen. Men først og fremmest ru' vi først, at de mange penge gav ham ro til at være hos Beau den sidste tid - hvilket jo er en sympatisk, men også meget betydnings forklaring - og at pengene fik hans misbrug til at eksplodere. Man kan købe meget crack for 50.000 dollar om måned'en.

**En lækker dame kommer forbi**  
Og sådan er Hunter Bidens selvbiografi. Den er et stærkt mubruygermanifest og en vild frontlinjepædagogik fra afhængighedens evige slagmark, men uden nødvendigvis feler sig svært i den endegyldige sandhed. Her er selvdokumentation på alle hylder, men ikke altid selv erkendelse. Læseren efterlades i sidste ende

Det er meget rørende, at Hentes Hiden efter at være blevet indlogeret på den ene afvænningsklinik efter den anden af sin rædselsfulde familie, blot for hver gang at flygte til nærmeste hotel og fortsætte misbruget, finder sin redning i tilfældets gunst: En lækker dame kommer forbi, og forelskelsen sus er stærkere end det fra stofferne.

De glister sig efter en uge, og et nyt clean eventyr er i gang. Men uldt i Hollywood-sammittens midler den eftertanke sig, som bogen ikke for alvor leverer. Overvinder kærligheden virkelig alt? Eller er vi nogle gange mere frislået vores rod end vores rødder?

Hunter Biden omfavner sin far og Jill Biden under Bidens indsettelse som præsident.  
Foto: Bitraiz Scanpix



Hunter Biden omfavner sin far og Jill Biden under bidens indvielse som præsident.  
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# Denmark

6. april 2021, Politiken, Sektion 2 (Kultur), Side 1, CHRISTIAN JENSEN, 1546 ord

**POLITIKEN**

**KULTUR**

# Jaget vildt



**Statue af Greta Thunberg vækker vrede**

Statue af Greta Thunberg i København har været genstand for en heftig debat. Mange mennesker har været ude på gaderne for at sætte deres egen statue op, mens andre har prøvet at sætte den ned. Det er en del af en større bevægelse, der hedder 'Jaget vildt'.

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**Jaget vildt ...**

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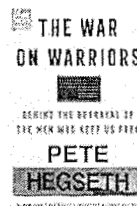
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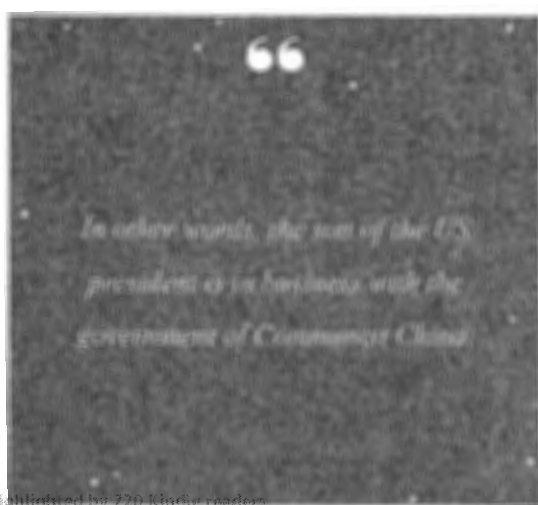
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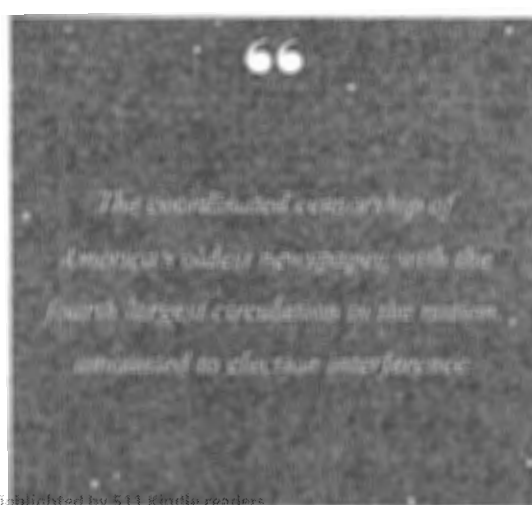
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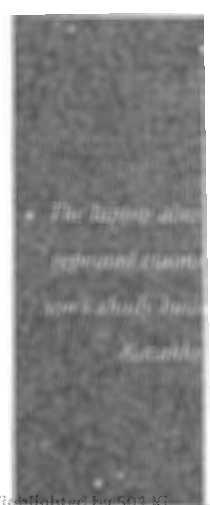
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### About the Author

Miranda Devine is a *New York Post* columnist and Fox News contributor. She also works for the Australian media as a *Daily Telegraph* columnist and a Sky News contributor. Born in Queens, New York, she grew up in Tokyo and Sydney, and attended Northwestern University in Chicago. A reformed mathematician and mother of two, she currently lives in New York with her husband.

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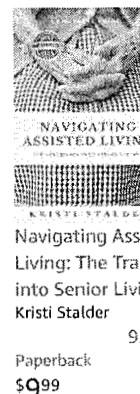
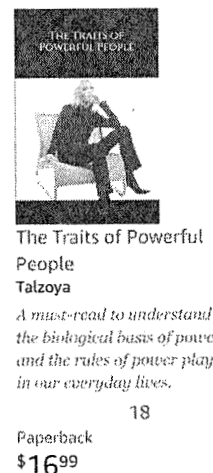
Miranda Devine is a *New York Post* columnist and Fox News contributor. She also works for the Australian media as a *Daily Telegraph* columnist and a Sky News contributor. Born in Queens, New York, she grew up in Tokyo and Sydney, and attended Northwestern University in Chicago. A

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### Top reviews from the United States

Jason O Dueck

Illuminating and provides context to events in July 2024

Reviewed in the United States on July 21, 2024

Verified Purchase

Just finished reading the book. It covered a substantial amount of grifting, but I found myself wondering about how many other unethical and secret deals the book did not uncover and publish. It provides context to the events of July 2024, where Hunter and the rest of Joe's inner circle is trying to convince him to continue running. He is their meal ticket.



Helpful

Report

Solomonspalding Com

**Pretty Explosive Stuff**

Reviewed in the United States on June 23, 2024

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I'm a Democrat, but it's pretty hard to like Biden after reading this, unless it's sympathy for having such a reprobate family. The galling feature is that US intelligence agencies said the book was Russian disinformation, when FBI had the book in possession and therefore knew it was genuine. Then Biden said in nationwide TV debates that U.S. intelligence agencies said the book was a Russian plant. Read the book and you be the judge.

5 people found this helpful

Helpful

Report

Amazon Customer

**I have not read this book yet. Can't wait to read it.**

Reviewed in the United States on July 25, 2024

Verified Purchase

I think I will like this book.

One person found this helpful

Helpful

Report

mark s collins

**Hunter's hell**

Reviewed in the United States on May 30, 2024

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If you are a republican—you love this book! You definitely find out that Joe was an absentee father who put himself before his kids!

8 people found this helpful

Helpful

Report

Maciej Swat

**Exhibit "A" on how censorship and suppression are doing fantastically well in the USA**

Reviewed in the United States on August 6, 2022

Verified Purchase

What can I say, Miranda Devine, in plain English, reports facts about content stored on infamous Hunter Biden laptop. It is hard not to get political writing review of this book but I will try.

Why is this book important? Because it shows how corruption and disinformation tilted the scale in one of the most important presidential election. The extent to which mainstream media suppressed the news on huge conflict of interest of current president would make Joseph Goebels extremely jealous. Yes, it is that bad. It is two years past election, so now you can ask yourself, what would happened facts prevailed instead of silly partisan bias?

In any case, this book shows how first family is "run" from the inside. It is worth taking a look regardless if you are voting for Democrats or republicans. The point of this book is not just to show how conflicted Biden family is but rather to point that it is very important that whoever represents a most powerful contry on earth cannot be tied, corrupted by or dependent on any foreign power.

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84 people found this helpful

Helpful

Report

Carolyn Kantjas Laub

**Pay to play game**

Reviewed in the United States on February 26, 2022

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I thank Devine for researching and writing this account of the greed and corruption among the Biden family. I was shocked by the quantity of intertwining joint ventures and the involvement of Russia, China, Ukraine, Mexico et.al. Hunter is even involved in unethical side deals to undermine the original partners

and funnel money from those partnerships into personal bank accounts and other companies controlled by the family. That was when the links came forward. All of this is corroborated and even more companies are revealed in another book called Profiles in Corruption. When you read the two together, you see the blatant disregard for America and the lack of morality and ethical behavior of this whole family. Hunter Biden has detailed everything about his life from 2013 to 2019 on this laptop. Hunter says the laptop "might be his" however, the selfies and videos he made of himself having sex are sprinkled throughout the laptop but Devine says the rumors about his interest in sex with minors is not true from what she saw on the laptop.

The first five chapters read like a soap opera with Hunter feeling the family does not appreciate him for the

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Mark A.

**The tip of the iceberg of the Evil in America today.**

Reviewed in the United States on May 31, 2024

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A glimpse into the evil darkness that is America's Administrative state. Mao and Stalin had nothing on these guys.

13 people found this helpful

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## Top reviews from other countries

Translate all reviews to English

Ryan M Donovan

**Great book!**

Reviewed in Canada on October 12, 2023

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A very well written book. So many people should be in jail you almost don't even know where to start. It's crazy how corrupt everything is....

One person found this helpful

Report

lichí.

**lectura obligada**

Reviewed in Mexico on December 22, 2021

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La autora expone claramente y con pruebas fehacientes todas las corrupciones de esta familia. Sus perversiones y sus actividades criminales.

Report

Translate review to English

I started to read the book, with 2 or 3 pages was enough, it is clear that the cardboard face, and his family have done barbarities, which hopefully will not happen again in any way. HELL OF BOOK

**Nada**

Reviewed in Spain on September 17, 2023

Verified Purchase

Mal y

Report

Translate review to English

Danny

**Impeach them all.**

Reviewed in India on April 14, 2022

Verified Purchase

ID #: 1206

Just completed half of the book, and feel like sliding down a rabbit hole full of lust, greed, privilege, treason and perversion. And the powers who suppressed this expose in 2020, be it MSM, big tech companies, should be impeached along with this so called first family. Even though the book came out in 2021, the book's content explains the reason behind Biden Administration's interest in Ukraine-Russia conflict. And a big update for the readers, is that the hard drive of the laptop has now entered in the US Congressional record. Please do read Peter Schweizer's "Red Handed", which is another brilliant investigation. And finally, thanks to Miranda Devine for such a daring investigation.

Report

Amazon Customer

**Laptop from Hell**

Reviewed in the United Kingdom on December 12, 2021

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Although a good read, this book tells a very disturbing and depressing story of the workings of the 1st family and the way the perpetual ruling elite can act with total impunity. There is a sad irony that working class people and minorities believe that the right are their enemies and are generally evil people, but that the left have their best interests at heart and are very decent people. This book peels away that veneer and exposes a ravenous, heaving, debauched greed for ever more power and wealth no matter what the consequences to national security. Dodgy deals with Russian oligarchs, high level negotiations with Chinese officials to leverage and promote Chinese interests over the US, bribery and coercion of foreign officials and all for the enrichment of the Biden family. While it appears that no excess was off the table, no deceitful device too immoral for Hunter Biden in his quest to feather the Biden family nest, there were parts of the book that actually made me feel sorry for him. He clearly is a troubled individual, but how many of his demons we sown by the man who should be protecting and guiding him?

25 people found this helpful

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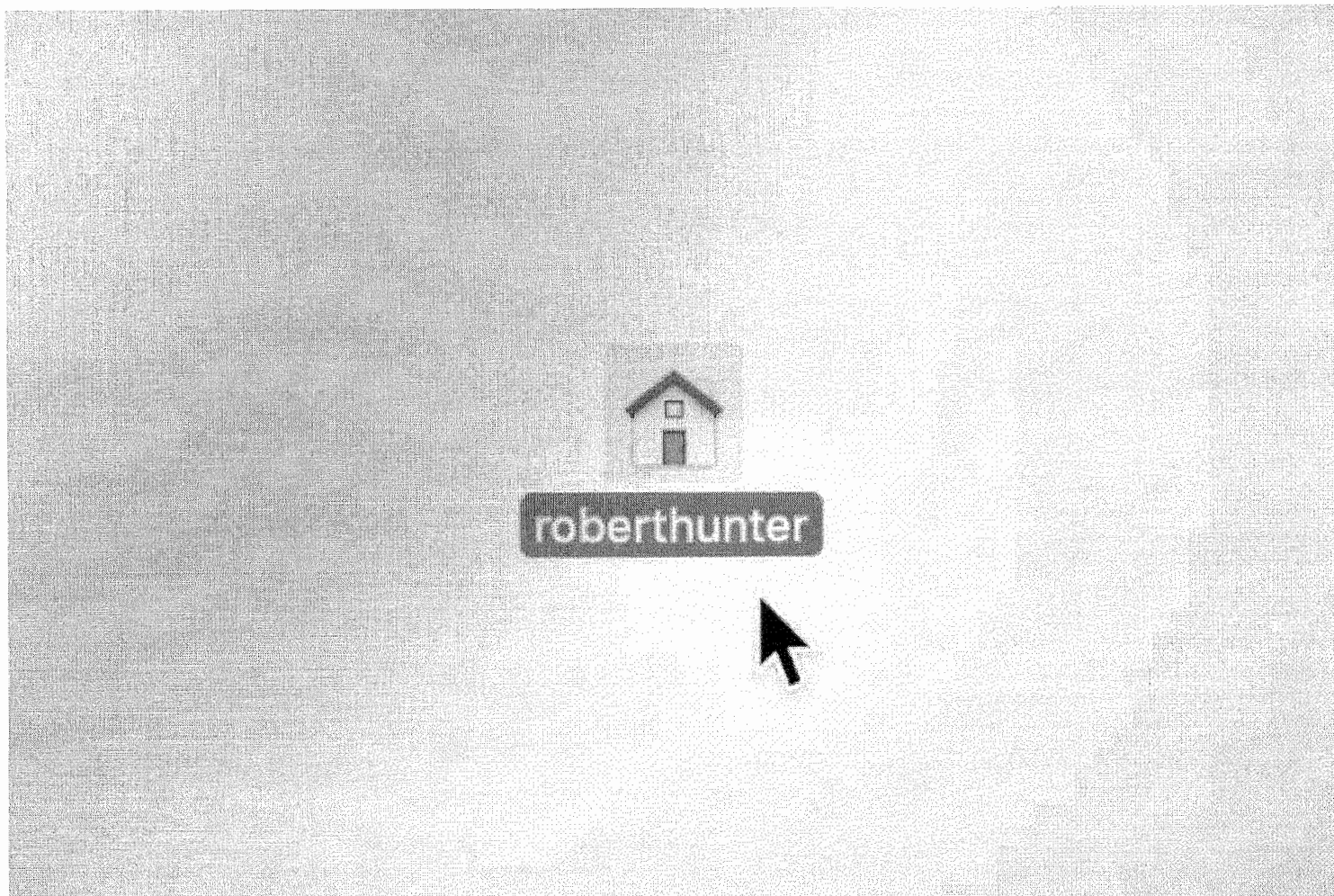
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# Exhibit 627



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# The Sordid Saga of Hunter Biden's Laptop

The most invasive data breach imaginable is a political scandal Democrats can't just wish away.

By Andrew Rice and Olivia Nuzzi

Photo: Marcus McDonald

*This article was featured in One Great Story, New York's reading recommendation newsletter. Sign up here to get it nightly.*

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scrawled once-urgent word fragments that now make zero sense to you; the  
as you fell down or the minor obsession or the thing that connected to the thing  
u to decide to do another thing that became a part of a part of a part of who  
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Now imagine that you are both the son of a man running for president and a lawyer and lobbyist  
accustomed to mixing with powerful people and doing business overseas premised on your  
proximity to those powerful people, and that you are in the throes of a divorce and a midlife  
catastrophe brought on by the early death of your older brother and that, in your distortion field  
of grief, on a hell-bent drug-and-alcohol binge, you have been making even more horrible  
choices, taking up with your brother's widow and, while in considerable financial debt, hiring  
prostitutes and zoning out with camgirls and staying awake for days at a time on crack cocaine  
and generally hurting everyone in your life who is trying to help you with your cruel and idiotic  
behavior.



And imagine that, in the middle of all of this, you lose control of 217 gigabytes of your personal data: videos in which you have sex; videos in which you smoke crack; bleary-eyed selfies; selfies that document your in-progress dental work; your bank statements; your Venmo transactions; your business emails; your toxic rants at family members; analysis from your psychiatrist; your porn searches; your Social Security number; explicit photos of the many women passing through your bedrooms, photos of your kids, of your father, of life and death, despair and boredom.

Imagine revealing this kaleidoscopic archive of all your different selves to anyone else. Now imagine it's not just anyone but the same political opposition that has already sought to destroy your father's candidacy by improperly pressuring a foreign leader to offer up dirt about your (sketchy, for sure) business dealings. Imagine, in a country with toxic and broken politics, how explosive this collection of data might appear to your enemies in the days leading up to a presidential election, and how valuable it might become after their defeat, as they seek to overturn and then undermine the results. For the sake of simplicity, let's call this nebulous cloud of data a "laptop."

**ON THE COVER**

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# NEW YORK



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**"I called Giuliani. I said, 'You're not going to believe what I have.'"**

**The Sordid Saga of  
HUNTER BIDEN'S LAPTOP**  
And Why It Still Matters.  
By **ANDREW RICE & OLIVIA NUZZI**

A picture of Hunter Biden's home-folder icon. Photo: Marcus McDonald for New York Magazine



The first thing you need to understand about the Hunter Biden laptop, though, is that it's not a laptop. The FBI reportedly took possession of the original — at least if you accept the version of events promoted by those who have distributed the data, which Hunter Biden and his lawyers don't — and all we have now are copies of copies. When it first publicly surfaced, 20 days before the 2020 election, the authenticity of the material was doubted to the degree that Twitter and Facebook effectively banned the story from legitimate political discourse. Since then, mainstream news organizations, including the New York *Times* and the Washington *Post*, have come to verify that at least some of the information contained in the cache is authentic.

It is hard to think of a single living individual who has experienced as total an annihilation of digital privacy since our devices became extensions of our consciousness. A suite of executives and thousands of employees were victimized by the Sony hack. In the iCloud hack known as "the Fappening," nude photos of dozens of celebrities ended up on Reddit and 4chan. The 2016 hack of DNC servers and John Podesta's Gmail exposed the private communications of a major political party. But in terms of the vastness of the data breach, the narrowness of its target, and its capacity to be deployed as a political weapon, none of those compare to the exposure of Hunter Biden's entire virtual life.

Hidden inside the laptop, according to those (almost exclusively on the right) who have reviewed the data or who trust the word of those who claim they have, is a corruption scandal that implicates not just Hunter but other members of the Biden family, including the president. The laptop details Hunter's involvement with a Ukrainian natural-gas producer that paid him millions of dollars to serve on its board — the relationship at the center of Donald Trump's first impeachment. It shows how a Chinese energy company directed millions of dollars in consulting fees to Hunter and his uncle. It reveals White House meetings and slush-fund dinners and wheeling and dealing, from Romania to Monte Carlo to Cafe Milano. Most important, these people claim the laptop contains proof that, despite his denials, Joe Biden — allegedly referred to in emails as "the big guy" — was fully aware of, and looking to profit from, his son's business activities.

The most serious allegations remain unproved. The White House has whistled past the issue, with ritual "no comments" on the occasions it is questioned about matters related to the laptop. (In response to a request from *New York*, a White House spokesperson said, "You can say the White House declined to comment for the story.") Without a counterargument from the White House or the Biden family, and with mainstream political reporters only now trying to catch up to the tabloid coverage and the ideologically motivated actors who have been advancing the story, Democrats in Washington simply don't know what to say. There has been no penalty for

silence while they've been in power, just the vague assumption that it does seem like there's something to the story, if only anyone credible would bother to check it out.

But the present stalemate, in which one side treats the subject with polite indifference while the other side foments and fundraises off it, is unsustainable. Maybe it will be broken by the Justice Department, which is reported to be conducting a wide-ranging criminal investigation into Hunter Biden, examining whether he violated various tax, money-laundering, and lobbying-disclosure laws. In July, CNN reported that the Justice Department had “debated the strength of the case for months,” as it faced an unofficial September deadline to file charges ahead of the midterm election. Biden paid off a large tax liability with the help of a loan from an entertainment attorney (one of at least three lawyers on his team) in an apparent attempt to head off a potential indictment.

Even if the DOJ doesn't bring charges against Hunter, Republicans may gain control of at least one chamber of Congress — and, with it, subpoena power — in November. If they do, they have vowed to start their own investigations, which would lead to months or years of manufactured drama. (The laptop has already been entered into the *Congressional Record* on a motion by Florida Republican Matt Gaetz.)

When you look at it as merely a political object, the laptop may not seem all that remarkable. But the implications of what happened to Hunter Biden go far beyond politics. Whether or not he turns out to be the perpetrator of a crime, he is certainly the victim of a violation — an invasion of privacy that is staggering in its totality. Even the people who are responsible for disseminating the laptop admit that, on a human level, what happened to Hunter is horrifying. “A lot of stuff I do, I don't feel great about,” says one of them, Steve Bannon. “But we're in a war.”

The act of investigation, once the discrete province of professionals, has been crowdsourced. And if you believe the story told by some famously unreliable narrators, it all begins with the eyewitness account of a computer repairman. Who is legally blind.



on October 20, 2020. The image of Hunter Biden's face came from an image found in the data. Photo: REUTERS/Brendan McDermid

**T**he way John Paul Mac Isaac tells the story, it was right before closing time on a Friday evening in 2019 when a stranger walked in, brushing past the vintage Apple PC mounted by the door of his computer-repair business in a strip mall in Wilmington, Delaware. Mac Isaac was used to encountering devices — and their owners — in extreme distress. “By the time they make it to me,” he says, “it’s pretty dire.” This customer had three broken laptops. Mac Isaac asked for a name to put on a repair order.

“Hunter,” the customer replied.

Last name?

“Ah, Biden.”



According to an image of the repair order, which was signed by someone whose signature looks a lot like Hunter Biden's, the date was April 12, 2019. Biden has said he spent much of that winter and spring living an itinerant existence, in motels and Airbnbs up and down the East Coast, on a furtive journey of self-destruction. He has never offered an alternative explanation of his whereabouts that day, so it's safe to assume he was in Delaware. He doesn't think he was out running errands, a friend says, but he can't say for sure, given his mental state at the time. The whole Biden family was trying to pull itself into shape to run against Trump.

"If you don't run I'll never have a chance at redemption," Hunter had recently texted his father.

"I'll run but I need you," Joe Biden texted back. "Only focus is recovery."

During this period, Hunter's days revolved around scoring and smoking crack. He had been in and out of treatment, but he couldn't stay clean. Like every addict, Biden had a litany of reasons for using. In his case, every politically attuned American already knows the tragic history: the car accident that killed his mother and sister when he was 2 and left him badly injured; the lifetime of comparisons to his more perfect brother, Beau; then Beau's death in 2015 and his grieving father's decision not to run for president the next year, when many Democrats are convinced, at least in retrospect, that he would have beaten Donald Trump. Now, four years later, Hunter was fighting with his ex-wife over their ruined finances and with Beau's widow, Hallie, over the fallout from the doomed affair they began after his brother's death. It was during this period that Jill Biden summoned Hunter to the family home in Wilmington, where he found his family waiting for him along with two drug counselors. Hunter split.

The man behind the counter at the Mac Shop didn't know about any of this personal turmoil. Like all his customers, this one was just a blur to Mac Isaac. He says he was first drawn to computers as an artistic kid with a medical condition, albinism, that impaired his eyesight — 20/400, he says — and kept him from driving but did not prevent him from seeing magnified images on a screen. He says that what he recalls of the man who brought in the laptops is a smudge of blue and gray clothing, a strong whiff of alcohol, and an air of entitlement.

Mac Isaac was a Mac guy in every sense. He had a tattoo of Apple's smiley-face Finder icon on his bicep and a triangular FireWire icon on the back of his neck. In an unlucky twist for Biden, he was also a Trump supporter, and like everyone in Delaware, he knew the name of Joe Biden's younger son.

The three laptops, Mac Isaac recalls, were all liquid damaged. One was dead. One was easily revived. The third, a 13-inch MacBook Pro, had a sticky, ruined keyboard. But Mac Isaac thought

he could still salvage its data. The job would cost \$85 and take a few days.

After the customer left the store, Mac Isaac says he closed up shop, popped open an Amstel Light, and started to work on the recovery. He dragged and dropped folders from the broken laptop onto an external drive. Almost immediately, Mac Isaac claims, he saw that the computer contained a large quantity of homemade pornography sitting right on the desktop. "It's not like I hadn't seen anything like that before," he says. "It was probably the most I've ever seen in one place."

A few days later, the blurry customer returned, this time to drop off a portable hard drive to hold the contents of his laptop. "When you see a grown man in a rainbow boa and a jock strap," Mac Isaac says, "it's hard not to have that image in your mind when he's staring you in the face." (It was pink, in truth, and it was an average scarf.) But he finished the job, made the backup, and called the cell-phone number the customer had given him to say he was done. The customer didn't come back and never paid the \$85. Mac Isaac says he put the broken laptop and the portable drive in a locked closet. Two weeks after the customer's visit, on April 25, Joe Biden officially launched his presidential campaign.

**T**he fine print of the original signed repair order says that equipment left in the shop longer than 90 days becomes its property. In interviews, several experts on Delaware law agreed that the document would make the laptop legally Mac Isaac's after that time, and once he took possession of the computer, nothing would legally prevent Mac Isaac from sharing its contents with the world. Even so, by his own account, Mac Isaac started to poke around before 90 days had elapsed. The very first time he looked at the desktop, he says, he noticed an intriguing file: "Income.pdf." "That kind of stood out," Mac Isaac says. "So I clicked."

If you want to make an argument to justify what happened next, the "Income" file is where it all starts. *The Laptop From Hell*, a 224-page book based on raw material from the data dump by New York *Post* columnist Miranda Devine, quotes from material found on the laptop to make the case that Hunter felt like his "family's cash cow," the son assigned the role of rainmaker while his father and older brother devoted themselves to public service. "Beau didn't take on these fucking responsibilities," Hunter reportedly ranted in a 2018 voice memo. "He didn't do any of this shit." In a text to his daughter Naomi, who was 25 at the time, Hunter complained that he had to "pay for everything for this entire family for 30 years," assuring her that unlike "Pop" — the family's name for Joe — he wouldn't take "half your salary." In right-wing circles, these texts have been



construed to suggest there was a formal revenue-sharing agreement between Joe and Hunter, though looked at in a more forgiving light, they can be read as hyperbolic bitching.

In a memoir chronicling the dissolution of her marriage, *If We Break*, Hunter's ex-wife, Kathleen, describes him as an archetypal get-rich-quick guy. "From early in our marriage," she writes, "the 'big breaks' were always just on the horizon, and every new partnership held enormous opportunity." In 2008, around the same time Barack Obama selected Joe Biden as his running mate, Hunter formed a consulting firm called Seneca Global Advisors and got involved in a business venture with John Kerry's stepson and a man named Devon Archer, who would later be convicted in a \$60 million scheme to defraud a Native American tribe. (Hunter was not implicated.) During the Obama years, Hunter embarked on a series of overseas ventures, the most significant of which, in the end, involved a company called Burisma.

Burisma, in case you've forgotten the arcana of the first Trump impeachment, is a Ukrainian natural-gas producer run by Mykola Zlochevsky, an oligarch and former government minister of Ukraine who came under investigation for allegedly using his Cabinet post for the benefit of his company. Despite appearances, Hunter Biden contends that Zlochevsky was a western-minded innovator who wanted expert legal guidance in reforming his country's energy sector. In 2014, Biden joined the company as a board member, a role that reportedly paid \$1 million for the first year. Biden claims that the arrangement offered him the financial freedom to tend to his family as his brother was dying. U.S. State Department officials were concerned enough about the appearance of impropriety that they raised the matter with the vice-president, who told his son, Hunter later said, "I hope you know what you are doing."

By July 2019, news organizations, most notably the New York *Times*, had published investigations of Hunter's dealings in Ukraine. Conservative outlets were trying to elevate the story into a major scandal. Rudy Giuliani and the investigative journalist John Solomon, among others, were holding regular meetings in an effort to advance the narrative. Mac Isaac was reading Solomon's articles and watching Fox News. Every time he heard a new name, he would search for mentions of it on the hard drive. One particularly intriguing email Mac Isaac discovered suggested that an adviser to Burisma's board named Vadym Pozharskyi had secured an audience with Joe Biden when he was overseeing diplomatic relations with Ukraine as VP. ("Dear Hunter," read the alleged smoking-gun email from April 2015. "Thank you for inviting me to DC and giving an opportunity to meet your father and spent some time together ...") Mac Isaac claims that he ignored the laptop's porn and concentrated on turning up evidence of what looked, at least to him, like political corruption. "I kept my blinders on," Mac Isaac says. "All I cared about was Burisma."

Then, in September 2019, word leaked of a CIA whistleblower's complaint about the White House call with Volodymyr Zelenskyy on which President Trump pressured the newly elected Ukrainian leader to investigate the Bidens and Burisma. A counter-scandal erupted, and the Democrats convened impeachment hearings. Mac Isaac thought the laptop might aid Trump's defense.

Mac Isaac claims he was also fearful. He was deeply versed in conspiracy theories about the "deep state" and the murderous political elites. "I'm a guy at the back side of an '80s strip mall," he says. "How hard would it be for me to disappear?" Mac Isaac reached out to his father, Steve, a retired Air Force colonel. In October 2019, Colonel Mac Isaac visited an FBI branch office near his home in Albuquerque. An agent brushed him off, advising him that he ought to consult a lawyer about the legality of examining the laptop. A few weeks later, though, an agent based in Delaware followed up with the colonel, who referred him to his son, telling him to use a special code word they had set up to thwart would-be assassins.

Two FBI agents visited Mac Isaac's home. He says they seemed primarily concerned with figuring out if the computer contained child pornography. Mac Isaac said he had not seen any. On December 9, 2019, according to the date on a copy of the grand-jury subpoena, the agents came to Mac Isaac's shop and took away a MacBook, serial number FVFXC2MMHV29, along with the external drive provided for the data recovery. That same day, the House Judiciary Committee was preparing to debate two impeachment articles. Mac Isaac was thrilled — finally, Attorney General Bill Barr and the Justice Department were going to see what he had discovered.

Mac Isaac had made a copy of the laptop's hard drive for himself as insurance. He had also set up a kind of dead man's switch, making another copy of the drive to give to someone he trusted, with instructions to pass it along in the event of his death to President Trump's lawyer Rudy Giuliani.

Within a few days, he started to feel uneasy about the FBI. The agents called him up asking for assistance in getting access to the drive. *Didn't the FBI have its own tech support?* He thought back to his conversation with the agents, especially a comment he recalled their making about his safety concerns, something to the effect of "Nothing happens to people who don't talk about these things." *Was that a threat?* He got back in touch with his father, and they called up an uncle, another former Air Force colonel who served on the board of a conservative nonprofit.

The Mac Isaacs decided to alert Congress to the existence of the laptop. They reached out to the offices of Representative Jim Jordan and Senator Lindsey Graham but heard nothing back. They



tried to get in touch with the president through the contact page on the White House website. While the process dragged on, Trump was acquitted by the Senate, Joe Biden clinched the nomination, and the pandemic shut down the world. Mac Isaac started to wonder, *What if Biden was elected?* Nine months after the FBI's visit, he decided to pursue his fail-safe option.

**T**he next link in the chain of custody was Robert Costello, the lawyer for the president's lawyer. Costello was representing Giuliani in an FBI investigation into his own Ukrainian activities, and as such, he had asked the former mayor's staff to be alert for new information coming in over the transom. On August 27, 2020, according to the text of an email Costello shared, one of Giuliani's assistants forwarded a strange tip that had come in through the contact portal on the Giuliani Partners website:

*From: John Paul Mac Isaac*

*Subject: Why is it so difficult to be a whistle blower when you are on the right?*

*For almost a year, I have been trying to get the contents of Hunter Biden's laptop to the proper authorities. I first reached out to the FBI and they came and collected it but I have reason to believe they have destroyed it or buried it in a filing cabinet ... Luckily for my protection I made several copies and I have been trying quietly to bring it to people's attention.*

The tipster went on to claim to have "email proof" that Hunter and a business partner had been paid more than a million dollars in fees by Burisma and that they had used "their influence at the White House to pressure the Ukraine government to stop investigating" the company. "I feel the closer we get to the election," Mac Isaac wrote, "the more this will be ignored."

Costello wrote right back, telling Mac Isaac that he and Giuliani were "in position to get the information to the right places, provided the information is accurate and was obtained lawfully." The timing was auspicious. A Republican-controlled Senate committee was working on an investigation of Hunter Biden, and Democrats were attacking the probe as a partisan smear job. The following month, the committee's report would cite bank records to conclude that Biden and his business associates had received at least \$4 million in fees from Burisma as well as millions more from other "foreign nationals with questionable backgrounds." Trump was seeking to capitalize on the issue. His campaign soon started selling T-shirts that asked WHERE'S HUNTER?

Mac Isaac replied to Costello by sending him an image of the signed repair order and the subpoena, which seemed to indicate that the laptop was relevant to a criminal investigation. Mac Isaac sent a copy of the laptop's contents to Costello's home, where he booted up the drive with the assistance of his son, who was handier than his dad was with computers.\*

## encer

aga of Hunter Biden's Laptop

potential sitting at a desk in the living room of his home in Massachusetts, the white-haired attorney, who was dressed for golf, booted up his computer. "How do I do this again?" he asked himself, as a login window popped up with a username: "Robert Hunter." (Hunter Biden's given first name is Robert.)

Like many Gen-Xers, Hunter Biden was apparently unwilling to entrust his data solely to the cloud. He used desktop applications and backed things up to a device, which was his undoing. Costello first scrolled through the laptop's email inbox, which contained tens of thousands of messages, fragments of everyday existence: a Politico newsletter dated January 31, 2019; Wells Fargo statements; a Google alert for the name "Biden"; a youth-soccer-game reminder. "Going through it," Costello said, "you become familiar with someone." He opened an email from Venmo, a receipt for a \$2,400 "art consultation" with a woman with a Russian-looking name.

Costello proceeded to the laptop's photo roll, which was populated by images from Biden's devices as well as those of other family members, including his brother Beau's children. Viewed sequentially, they appeared to tell a story. There was a photo of Beau's gravestone in 2015; there was a photo of Hunter and Joe Biden on a military cargo plane toward the end of Obama's second term; there, on November 9, 2016, was a photo of a television screen and the gloating face of President-elect Donald Trump; there was a screenshot of an angry text, apparently sent by his half-sister, Ashley Biden, to a group chat including Hallie Biden, confronting Hallie about her affair with Hunter ("this isn't love, this is my brother high"); and there was another shot of a television, this time displaying a chyron reporting that he and Hallie had gone public with their relationship.

After that came the crack-up. "You're fascinated by the fact that he's so debauched," Costello said, speaking for himself, as he hovered over images of glass pipes, hotel sheets, body parts.

"That's Hunter," he said, pointing to a disembodied penis.

But it wasn't just Biden's sex life that was on the hard drive. It was his whole life. Costello scrolled back up, rewinding time to May 27, 2015. The image was of Beau Biden three days

before his death. He was in a hospital bed, his mouth agape, his eyes glazed and terrified.

Costello admitted that picture was hard to look at. "You feel like a voyeur," he said. It was a feeling Costello could live with. He saw the laptop's potential power as a political weapon, and he took the logical next step. "I called Giuliani," he recollected. "I said, 'You're not going to believe what I have.'"

*Clockwise from top left: Steve Bannon on Murdoch-owned Sky News Australia, October 18, 2020. Rudy Giuliani on Greg Kelly's show on Newsmax, October 20, 2020. John Paul Mac Isaac on Hannity, January 22, 2021. Vish Burra on Representative Matt Gaetz's podcast, November 11, 2021. Jack Maxey on Newsmax, April 7, 2022. Donald Trump Jr. on Eric Bolling's show on Newsmax, June 16, 2022. Emma-Jo Morris on Nigel Farage's show on GBN, May 4, 2022. Miranda Devine on Tucker Carlson, March 18, 2022. John Solomon on Sean Spicer's show on Newsmax, July 16, 2021. Tony Bobulinski at a press conference carried on LiveNOW from Fox,*

**E**mma-Jo Morris was at her apartment in New York with her artist girlfriend and their new puppy when she heard from Vish Burra. It was Yom Kippur, “a very, very auspicious day. A heavy day energetically and spiritually,” she said, “and I’m fasting at home when I get this text from Vish saying, ‘Steve Bannon is going to call you.’”



Morris and Burra had met during the 2016 presidential election, when she was a producer for *Hannity* and he was a business analyst at a software company who posted political memes as a hobby. She was from Quebec, the daughter of a real-estate developer and a salesman who had worked his way to the middle class from a warehouse job. He grew up on Staten Island and sold weed to get by. They vibed immediately. Long before she came to America, Morris felt that the world revolved around what happened here. She adjusted her interests accordingly. "We had to pirate Fox News on an American cable box that took something like a SIM card that was registered to a U.S. address, which we got from the natives," she said. At Concordia University in Montreal, she focused her studies on American politics and western political theory. "America coughs and the world catches a cold, right?" she said. Weeks after graduation, she went through the cable box and emerged inside News Corp.

The limitations of the medium soon became apparent. Morris did not fit the profile of the average Fox News viewer, and though she had a sense of humor about the ways in which her taste was often in conflict with her ideals, she had to admit that cable was not for her. It was boring, and it was dying. It all felt formulaic and stilted. What she wanted, she said, was something more "hard-core." Her relationship with Burra reflected this desire. "We used to go for brunch and chill, chain-smoke cigarettes, and just chat. I had a Silk Road of my brand in Canada being imported to me on a constant basis. Belmonts," Morris said. "Vish grew up in a very working-class neighborhood. He's a child of immigrants. He had a rough time. And, I don't know, I just liked it. I liked his vibe. I liked his edge."

By September 2020, Morris, then 27, was the deputy political editor of the *New York Post*. "My guiding principle was representing people like my dad. I felt like I knew my reader that way," she said. "I am a nationalist, populist conservative." Meanwhile, Burra had joined Bannon's entourage. Since being fired by Trump in 2017, the former chief White House strategist had focused his attention on promoting right-wing populism and hosting *War Room*, for which Burra was a producer. Minutes after Morris read the text from Burra, her phone rang.

"Hi, it's Steve Bannon," the voice on the other end of the line said. "I'm calling because I have a story that's going to change your life."

"What?" Morris said with a laugh.

"I have Hunter Biden's computer."

Bannon had learned about the laptop from Giuliani, who had gotten his copy from Costello. After quickly satisfying himself that the information was real, Giuliani had started to think about

ways to disseminate it to the voting public. He had no confidence in the mainstream media.

"They're going to kill it before it's born," Giuliani said, recalling his thought process. So he brought in Bannon, who knew how to get the attention of reporters. Drama was both his custom and his strategy.

When Giuliani first called, Bannon figured he was just peddling bullshit. By now, Giuliani's obsession with Hunter Biden and Burisma had already led to one impeachment. "You gotta remember, I love Rudy," Bannon said, "However — and maybe history will prove differently — the whole Ukrainian thing, he starts talking about it, and I go, 'Rudy, Rudy, Rudy! It's a sideshow!' Rudy gets so crazy on the Ukrainian stuff."

Something Giuliani said, though, snapped Bannon to attention. "He said this was all about China, not just Ukraine. China." Fighting the supposed peril of Red Chinese influence was Bannon's personal hobbyhorse. He came up to New York and, at Giuliani's apartment on the Upper East Side, took a look at what was inside the laptop. "It actually stunned me," he says.

In December 2013, not long before Hunter got involved with Burisma, he accompanied his father on a visit to Beijing aboard Air Force Two and met with a Chinese businessman who was interested in investing capital outside the country. Later on — only after his father left office, Hunter has stressed — Hunter took a 10 percent equity stake in a venture with the businessman. Toward the end of the Obama administration, Hunter began a separate set of talks with Ye Jianming, a Chinese energy magnate who, like many businessmen of his stature, had ties to the nation's Communist Party. In 2017, Hunter and his partners formed a corporate entity to pursue business ventures with Ye's company, including a later-scuttled \$40 million investment in a natural-gas project on Monkey Island in Louisiana. A 2017 email from a representative for one of the partners (subject line: "Expectations") was allegedly found on the laptop. It proposed a corporate structure in which Hunter would own 20 percent of the company, with another 10 percent "held by H for the big guy." The big guy, many on the right believe, was Joe Biden.

There is little else on the laptop to suggest that Joe Biden profited from, or was even fully aware of, his son's business activities. In 2017, the former vice-president was a private citizen, so partaking in the deal wouldn't have been illegal, but he hadn't foreclosed the possibility of a future presidential run, and going into business with Chinese investors connected to the Communist Party would certainly have been a political and ethical nightmare for him. That said, the "Expectations" email was not written by Hunter Biden, and that deal ended up falling apart. But the Chinese relationship still proved fruitful for the Biden family. According to a subsequent Washington Post investigation, Ye later struck an agreement that paid nearly \$5 million in legal and consulting fees to entities controlled by Hunter and his uncle James Biden. At the time,



Hunter was acting as an attorney for an associate of an executive at the company, who ended up being arrested at JFK airport and charged with bribing government officials in Chad and Uganda. The next year, Ye was detained by Chinese authorities, and the payments eventually stopped.

**B**annon, a gifted aphorist, likes to say that with the laptop, “you come for the pornography, but you stay for the compromise.” When he booted it up, he claims, it pried open a window that revealed the corrupt bargains at the heart of America’s relationship with China. “And Rudy had no idea what he had,” Bannon said. “I told Rudy, ‘This is incredible. This is the heart of the elite capture through the money-laundering and influence-peddling operations of the Chinese Communist Party.’” The China angle also happened to align with his financial interests. He had spent much of that summer living on a yacht owned by an exiled Chinese billionaire named Guo Wengui, a prominent critic of the ruling party and the latest in a long line of wealthy patrons. A few weeks before Giuliani’s call, Bannon had been arrested on the yacht and charged for his role in an alleged financial fraud related to fundraising for a private effort to build a wall on the Mexican border. (He was later sprung from the federal case by a Trump pardon, then, on September 8, turned himself in after being indicted by a grand jury in New York on state charges. He has pleaded not guilty.)

Bannon tried to gin up interest within sympathetic media outlets. When he reached Morris, on the holiest day in the Jewish calendar, she was not in the mood to process what he was pitching. The following day, they spoke again. “He said, ‘We just have his computer.’ He was kind of vague. I remember him being kind of cagey about it. He told me that Hunter Biden was on crack and left it somewhere and they got it.”

Bannon baited Morris with glimpses of the materials he said he could provide. At the time, he and a team from *War Room* were working out of a luxury hotel near St. Patrick’s Cathedral, scouring the drive for damaging material. Burra dubbed the effort “the Manhattan Project.” They expected that when the story detonated, it might swing the election to Trump. Finally, Bannon convinced Morris to meet with Costello. With the blessing of News Corp. attorneys, she headed out to Long Island. Costello gave her his show.

“It all felt much more legit after I saw it,” Morris said. “Like, *Okay, they have a hard drive.*” She copied some of the files onto a thumb drive and took an Uber back to the city. She called her boss with an update. “I was like, ‘I think this is something. I took some stuff to show you. It really looks like it’s Hunter’s.’ She said, ‘Bring it to me and we’ll take it to legal and figure out next

steps.” Then she called Burra. “I said, ‘I think this is legit,’ and he was like, ‘Yeah, it’s gonna be cool. Maybe you’ll be able to write a book by the end.’” She smiled at the memory. “You couldn’t have known what this was going to be,” she said. “I hadn’t seen ‘10 percent for the big guy.’ I hadn’t seen anything. I just thought I had something cool, you know what I mean? That was kind of the energy.” She had never had such a big story, never overseen such a big investigation, and while she was anxious about how to get it right, she was not conflicted about whether it was right to try to get it at all. In her opinion, the news value was obvious. “I was thinking if someone came to me and just said, ‘Hunter Biden was on crack,’ which we know he does, ‘and left his laptop somewhere, and forfeited ownership’ — that’s a great story,” she said. “Like, *What a degenerate!* I figured that alone could be just a tabloid story.”

She came to believe the contents of the laptop exposed a corruption that went far beyond partisan interest. “If this was all Don Jr., I would have gone harder, because it would be a story about how this person says that they’re a populist while they’re in bed with the CCP, right?” she said. “I just find it repulsive to capitalize off of your political power, especially in a foreign country. How dare you?”

For several days, as News Corp. reviewed the information, anxiety hummed around Morris. “Bannon and Rudy are starting to get crazy on me,” she said. “Calling me, asking, ‘Are you going? Are you going?’” Morris began to worry, too. If forces within the company hierarchy wanted to overrule her judgment for reasons political or prosaic, they surely could. To most outsiders, Rupert Murdoch’s tabloid may have looked like a conservative rag, but to Morris, News Corp. was still a coastal media bureaucracy. “I was like, ‘Are we going or not? Just tell me, because I want to get these guys off my ass,’” she said. The range of options for a good employee doing her best to respect the formal processes of her workplace was limited. To do what she wanted, Morris would have to get creative. “I couldn’t undermine my boss. I couldn’t apply pressure myself. But I could involve a big gun at the organization.” Once Miranda Devine, a columnist from Murdoch’s native Australia, was alerted to the story, everything began to move. By the end of the week, the *Post* had decided to proceed — *if* she could get a copy of the drive from Giuliani.

That Sunday, Morris and her girlfriend took their puppy to run some errands. As they roamed through the Container Store, Morris negotiated with Giuliani by phone. “I said, ‘Okay, we’re serious. I need the computer or the hard drive.’” He said no. “We were going back and forth. He said, ‘You need to promise me five covers of the New York *Post*.’ I said, ‘Rudy, you can have 20 covers of the New York *Post* if you give me this and it’s everything that we think it is.’ He was like, ‘Fine. Fine.’” Before he could change his mind, Morris and her partner went straight to Giuliani’s apartment. They convened in the study with Costello. “Our concern was her not peeing,” she said of the puppy.



“Welcome to the seventh circle of hell,” Bannon said when he walked in. From then on, Morris said, the hard drive was known as the “Laptop From Hell.” (The formulation “from hell” is credited to the comedian Richard Lewis, who made a joke about a “date from hell.” Reached for comment, Lewis said, “There’s a jail from hell waiting for people who steal my material.”) Bannon and Giuliani handed over an external hard drive.

On Wednesday, October 14, 2020, just 20 days before the election, BIDEN SECRET E-MAILS appeared on the front page of the *Post*. The paper described what it said was evidence that Joe Biden knew more than he had admitted about his son’s Ukrainian business, breezing through the convoluted tale of the “massive trove of data uncovered from a laptop computer.” The Biden campaign had not responded to a request for comment, according to the publication, but Hunter’s lawyer George Mesires offered a statement — about Giuliani. “He has been pushing widely discredited conspiracy theories about the Biden family, openly relying on actors tied to Russian intelligence,” he said. It was not a denial.

Outside the right-wing media, the reaction to the story was something like anxious paralysis. Social-media giants and news outlets had absorbed much of the blame for the results of the 2016 election, and they approached the 2020 election with caution, especially with respect to material that might be peddled by hostile foreign governments to affect voting. “The FBI came to us,” Mark Zuckerberg would later tell Joe Rogan, “and was like, ‘Hey, just so you know, you should be on high alert. We thought there was a lot of Russian propaganda in the 2016 election. We have it on notice that basically there’s about to be some kind of dump that’s similar to that.’” On September 24, less than a month before the *Post* story, the head of security policy for Facebook had told the press to be careful since “threat actors,” including foreign adversaries, would try anything to “trick journalists into doing their amplification for them.”

Zuckerberg told Rogan he could not recall whether the FBI specifically mentioned Hunter Biden or his personal data in the warning issued to Facebook, but the *Post* story “fit the pattern” of what they had described. Facebook tweaked its algorithm to suppress its circulation. Twitter froze the accounts of users who shared news about the laptop, including the *Post*’s official account.

Members of the press who attempted to independently verify the report, meanwhile, were told by Giuliani that he would not hand over the hard drive and by the Biden campaign that accounts of a meeting between the vice-president and a Burisma adviser were refuted by his official schedule. A Biden spokesman said he had engaged in “no wrongdoing.”

By Monday, October 19, the narrative of a potential Russian hack had calcified. In an open letter published by Politico, dozens of high-ranking veterans of the intelligence community claimed

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the data cited by the *Post* “has all the classic earmarks of a Russian information operation.” The letter was signed by the likes of James Clapper and Michael Hayden. Clapper was not pleased to be asked about the letter two years after its release. “What are you trying to get me to say, that I screwed up and I shouldn’t have signed the letter? I’m not going to say that,” he said. “Did you read paragraph five of the letter? As far as I was concerned, we were waving the yellow flag. At the time, it was fishy to me. It had the characteristics of a Russian disinformation campaign.” Hayden said he had not maintained much interest in the story. “I’m not following it,” he said, but he stood by the decision to sign and release a statement about a theory for which there was only circumstantial evidence. “I was perfectly fine with that,” he said. “It looked like disinformation ... It would be nice if we didn’t have to do anything or say anything, but the Russians were doing so much.”

The most immediate victim of the *Post*’s initial stories, besides Hunter Biden, turned out to be the Trump campaign. At the same time as Giuliani and Bannon were working to inject the story into the public discourse, a rival camp of Trump operatives led by Arthur Schwartz, an associate of Donald Trump Jr.’s, had been trying to get *The Wall Street Journal* to publish a story about Hunter’s overseas business dealings, based on interviews with a former business partner named Tony Bobulinski. Amid the uproar over the laptop, the *Journal* rushed out a shorter than expected version of the investigation and basically dropped the matter. Bobulinski appeared at a disorganized press conference before a presidential debate in Nashville. That night, Trump brought up the “Laptop From Hell” and offered an incoherent defense when Biden called it a “Russian plan” to influence the election. (“Is this where you’re going? ... The laptop is Russia, Russia, Russia?”)

The nation’s most influential media institutions approached the sordid matter with grave skepticism. In a note to the Washington bureau the day the *Post* story ran, *Times* editor Elisabeth Bumiller wrote: “Hey all, let’s please refrain from tweeting about the story while we’re reporting it out. Thanks very much.”

“It was as though because the *Times* had not reported it, it did not exist,” says a former *Times* staffer. “There’s a whole category of story where conservative media covers it — sometimes sloppily — and then mainstream media institutions treat the whole area as radioactive and just won’t cover it, just surrender the subject matter entirely.”

A reporter for a major television network defended the impulse. “If you were a New York *Times* reporter, let’s say, or a CNN reporter, and you’re looking at it, there are a million red flags. It was a thorny story to report out,” this person said. The *Times* had been pilloried for its intensive reporting on Clinton’s emails as the 2016 election approached, and BuzzFeed ended up mired in



litigation after it published the now-discredited Steele dossier the following year. “Every news organization had their credibility on the line,” said the television reporter. To the extent the mainstream and liberal media (if you accept that they are different) discussed the laptop much at all, it was laughed off as another strange Trumpworld adventure in disinformation and incompetence.

Donald Trump himself wouldn’t stop talking about the laptop. Shortly before the election, he brought it up with Barr, the attorney general. “You know, if that was one of my kids — ” Trump said, before Barr cut him off, according to an anecdote Barr recounts in his memoir. Two years later, Trump would still be raving about what he calls a double standard in coverage of his opponent’s family. “If somebody from the Republican Party or the Trump family did that, I think they’d call for the death penalty,” Trump says.

What Barr didn’t tell Trump in October 2020, he claims, was that even before the laptop went public, a federal criminal investigation into Hunter Biden was underway.

**T**he laptop story did not have the intended effect on the election. On November 7, 2020, hours after Rudy Giuliani stood in the parking lot of Four Seasons Total Landscaping and said the election had been stolen, Joe Biden stood grinning on a stage in front of a big honking crowd of parked cars at his socially distanced victory rally in Wilmington. He was now president-elect. “Let this grim era of demonization in America,” he said, “begin to end here and now.” The rest of the family joined him and Jill onstage. Hunter was first to embrace him, while cradling his 7-month-old son, Beau.

Watching the Bidens celebrate, Jack Maxey thought to himself: *They got protected*. Maxey, a *War Room* co-host, had helped to dumpster-dive through the laptop before the election. But their effort had been for nothing, and now they were disappointed and deplatformed. Two days before Biden declared victory, Twitter had suspended the *War Room* account for posting a video in which Bannon and Maxey mused about whether Trump should behead Dr. Anthony Fauci and FBI director Christopher Wray.

Trump’s defeat caused a schism. Burra and Maxey wanted to continue to mine the laptop. But Bannon was shifting to a postelection phase — contesting the count — and for that, the laptop was of no further use. Maxey claims Bannon threatened to fire him if he kept mentioning Hunter and the FBI on the air. Maxey says he quit instead. “For a guy who’s full of bluster,” he says of Bannon, “he’s kind of afraid of his own shadow.” Shortly after the inauguration, Maxey drove back to South Florida, taking a copy of the hard drive.

Maxey was a Palm Beach society guy. He came from Main Line money and had been an investment banker. Prior to joining *War Room*, his closest brush with political fame had come in 2018, when his Yale classmate Brett Kavanaugh was up for confirmation to the Supreme Court and a raunchy yearbook photo of their old fraternity appeared on the Huffington Post. “My little Irish cock was peeking out from the tails of my Brooks Brothers shirt,” Maxey recalls. He says he was the show’s de facto expert on the Biden family. “I knew a lot of the old-school people in Delaware,” Maxey says, claiming that he had run into Beau Biden a few times. Maxey never encountered Hunter, but he felt like the hard drive had given him insight into his psyche. “There’s been times when you’re looking at this laptop where you just feel like you’re surrounded by darkness,” he says. “You cannot even imagine the depth of the corruption.”

Hunter Biden might reply here, if he were interested in offering a comment for the record, that it’s pretty rich for the people who are sifting through his text messages with his family and prying into his most private moments, down to the dying breaths of his beloved brother, to suggest that he is the one who is dark and amoral. (Biden and his legal team declined to comment for this article.) He freely admits that he was an addict and that he did many terrible things to himself and his family during a two- or four- or five-year period — he’s vague about the time parameters — that followed Beau’s cancer diagnosis and death. He started the confessional process in a 2019 *New Yorker* profile, giving a series of raw personal interviews to reporter Adam Entous. He didn’t inform his father’s campaign organization that he was participating in the story, and it turned out he withheld some important details from *The New Yorker*, too. When he wasn’t on the phone with the reporter, declaring himself a new man, he was in his hotel room in West Hollywood, playing host to a sleepless procession of dealers and shady characters.

Hunter revealed that detail in his recovery memoir, *Beautiful Things*, which was published soon after his father’s inauguration. This time, the author promised, he was speaking with total openness and honesty about his infidelity and addiction. Through his personal turmoil, though, he has consistently denied any financial impropriety. And for all the time they have spent scrutinizing his emails and his dick pics, Maxey and others have yet to find any incontrovertible evidence of criminality.

Hunter had presumed that once the election was finished, he would be able to go back to his life in California with his new wife, Melissa Cohen, a South African activist he met and married in the space of six days in 2019, and their son, Beau, now 2. Instead, he ended up in “a sort of exile,” a friend says, waiting for the Justice Department to decide whether to charge him and trying to ignore the tabloids and the political stuntmen. Last year, after the *Daily Mail* revealed the location of his then-residence, a rental home on a canal in Venice, California, right-wing film producers paddled by on a kayak to heckle him through a bullhorn. Someone parked a truck



across the street with a billboard on it so that when he looked outside, he would be greeted by giant images of the haunted selfies from the laptop documenting his life at rock bottom. That was still less disturbing than the time, at his previous house in the Hollywood Hills, a group of people in MAGA hats banged at his front gate and shouted Hunter's name while Melissa, then pregnant, cowered inside.

To Hunter's pursuers, including Maxey, big tech's decision to label the laptop as disinformation was just more evidence of what a serious threat it posed to the Bidens and the deep state. They were determined to prove that Hunter was even more depraved than he admitted. On Fox News, Tucker Carlson, who used to be friendly with Hunter, started to deliver conspiratorial stem-winders, suggesting his former dinner companion was involved in all kinds of unspeakable activities. Maxey became a kind of Johnny Appleseed of the hard drive, sending copies to Republicans in Congress and an investigative team at the *Washington Post*. The *Daily Mail* flew Maxey out to Los Angeles to meet with a reporter and hired a former FBI computer-forensics expert to authenticate the drive.

That April, two days after *Beautiful Things* went on sale, the *Daily Mail* published a story headlined exclusive: WHAT WASN'T IN HUNTER BIDEN'S BOOK. The article, culled from "103,000 text messages, 154,000 emails, more than 2,000 photos and dozens of videos," would be the first of many. It was illustrated with a photo of Hunter straddled by a pair of women, reported he was "obsessed with making porn films with prostitutes," and reprinted messages between him and his father. "Be careful what you text," Joe Biden cautioned in one exchange. "Likely I'm being hacked."

Still, the story barely made a blip outside the conservative-media bubble. Maxey tried to turn up the volume, describing in a public speech an allegedly indecent photo of a teenage girl that he had seen on the computer. At the time the original laptop stories were published, Giuliani had advanced a similar claim, driving down to Delaware to urge the local police to investigate whether one of the photos on the laptop amounted to child pornography. The Delaware authorities showed no interest, and others who examined the laptop suggested a more innocent explanation: The photo belonged to a teenage Biden family member whose photo roll had been backed up on the laptop. Still, the insinuation, which resonated with the QAnon conspiracy theory, seeped into the cultural groundwater.

After several months of talking about the laptop, Maxey said he began to worry. "I was getting welfare calls from all my military and intel friends saying, like, 'Just checking to see if you're still alive,'" he said. "I had an Escalade parked out in front of my house — weird shit." Maxey decided

Palm Beach was too hot. Earlier this year, he flew to Zurich. Outside the U.S., he told the press, he could take the search deeper.

**S**teve Bannon said that people who possess the laptop tend to read their own obsessions into it. The multifaceted nature of such a large collection of data meant that its meaning was elastic. "It's got talismanic powers," Bannon says. "If you really understand what you've got, the talisman, you understand that it unlocks everything that you ever wanted. It's got the answers." But he said the magical object could also be deranging to those who held it too closely. As an example, Bannon mentioned Maxey, who describes himself as "Hunter's laptop king."

From Switzerland, in April, Maxey gave an interview to the *Daily Mail* in which he claimed he and a German computer expert had recovered an additional 450 gigabytes of "deleted material" from the hard drive, including another 80,000 previously unseen images. This second trove, Maxey implied, was even more disturbing than the original. Maxey's claims compelled Tucker Carlson to fly to Zurich with a crew from Fox to review the purported laptop material. (A portion of their interview later aired on Tucker's show.) Maxey claims that a delegation from WikiLeaks showed up at the same time, hoping to post the data on the internet. But Maxey's Swiss exile ended badly. "My tech guy is a good guy, but he's almost like Rain Man," Maxey says. He said the German had grown so paranoid about the potential reach of the Bidens and U.S. intelligence services that he nearly turned the laptop over to the Russian Embassy. Maxey said he intercepted him on a train to Bern.

By the summer, Maxey had returned to the U.S. "It's really amazing to me how many people refuse to touch this," he said when reached by phone. He immediately offered to pass along a copy of the laptop. The next morning, he hopped on a train up to New York.

We met at a hotel in Soho. "Chasing rabbit holes has been my life," Maxey said. He had a mop of blond hair, unruly in the style of Boris Johnson. "Here is the disc," he said, pushing a small black hard drive across the table: the laptop. He held up another drive, the one with the new, more hellish stuff. He was keeping that to himself.

Back at the office, following Maxey's instructions, we booted up the external drive. At Apple's familiar opening window, beneath the "Robert Hunter" golf-ball login icon, we entered the password Maxey supplied, which was "password." The desktop no longer resembled the jumbled, porny mess that Mac Isaac says he first encountered. Costello said it had been cleaned up by the time it got to his house. ("I got a wife around here," he explained.) There were also a number of



new folders, with titles like “Salacious Pics” and “The Big Guy.” (“I made those folders,” Vish Burra said. “I put them all in a folder when I found them because I couldn’t email them to myself because there was no internet.”) The many alterations made the laptop all but impossible to trust. “The forensic quality of this thing is garbage,” says Johns Hopkins computer-science professor Matthew Green, a cryptography expert who examined the drive for the *Washington Post*. He told the paper that it was like a crime scene that previous detectives had left strewn with burger wrappers. Even so, there was no mistaking the identity of the body.

The laptop’s devotees have lately been thrilled by the fact that major news outlets have finally come to the conclusion that it was not a piece of Russian disinformation. In March, in the 24th paragraph of a story about the federal grand-jury probe of Hunter Biden, the *Times* reported that emails from “the cache were authenticated by people familiar with them and with the investigation.” Later that month, the *Washington Post* began to publish a series of stories on Hunter’s finances, focusing on his China deals, citing a copy of the drive provided by Maxey. It also described how some emails in the drive were authenticated by Green and a second expert.

“When you consider all the shit I’ve said in the last year,” Maxey said, “no one’s sued me for defamation.” He took that as a form of vindication. (Among other things, Maxey has claimed the laptop revealed Hunter’s role in maybe possibly starting the pandemic through his involvement in an investment firm that had an interest in a biotech start-up that reportedly collaborated in bat research at the Wuhan Institute of Virology.)

At the hotel, though, the laptop king was worried that he was losing control of his domain. Maxey had been publicly feuding with Garrett Ziegler, a 26-year-old former Trump White House aide who started a website that hosts a searchable database of Biden’s emails. Maxey was similarly infuriated with Kim Dotcom, a well-known hacktivist and intellectual-property pirate who Maxey says had lured away his former German collaborator. In April, Dotcom tweeted that the laptop data, including “all previously deleted and recovered files,” was now in the hands of WikiLeaks. “All of a sudden it’s like I get betrayed by my tech guy and Kim Dotcom,” Maxey groused. “And I’m like left out in the cold.”

What was on the second hard drive? Maxey offered only hints. But a few weeks later, an anonymous 4chan user announced they had obtained iPhone and iPad backups belonging to Hunter Biden, which they reportedly claimed to have recovered by using a tool called iPhone Backup Extractor. Maxey blasted out a text message, claiming that his “tech guy had a nervous breakdown or basically a psychotic episode and went rogue and published this stuff.” He later explained that the backups made up a portion of the material recovered in Zurich, which he said his former collaborator, whom he now identified as one Vincent Kaufman, had unlocked by

using passwords stored in the iCloud keychain on his laptop. “He committed theft,” Maxey said. He added that the data was “100 percent real” and that if *New York* wanted the entire trove, he was willing to sell it.

When reached for comment, Kim Dotcom called Maxey a “lunatic,” and rebutted Maxey’s claim that he had offered to pay for any laptop data. “I arranged a meeting between Jack and Wikileaks in Switzerland,” he wrote in an email. “Subsequently I have been told that Maxey lied about the claim that he found 450gb of deleted files in the data. There were no such files.”

“Jack is a grifter,” Vincent Kaufman said, adding that he was done talking about the laptop. “This whole thing has given me only stress and grief ... and I don’t want to have anything to do with that stupid hard drive and every garbage person associated with it.”

For a few days, the Hunter Biden iPhone leak burned up the right-wing regions of the internet. Then it emerged that the device had actually belonged to a different Hunter Biden — Beau Biden’s 16-year-old son.

**I** have no regrets,” said John Paul Mac Isaac. “Unless something horrible happens, and then I’m in prison.”

On a morning in June, Mac Isaac was sitting in a booth at Angelo’s Luncheonette in Wilmington, just a few blocks from the former location of his now-closed repair shop. His whole life had changed since the day in October 2020, when he says “five reporters bum-rushed me” and he learned that the press had discovered his role in turning up the laptop. Afterward, he says, vandals defaced the store and he was barraged with negative reviews and hateful emails. As a result, he had become a Trumpy folk hero, appearing on podcasts and at campaign rallies, often wearing a kilt and a Scottish Balmoral hat.

On this morning, Mac Isaac was dressed in a plaid button-up and a flat cap. He was starting to promote a forthcoming book, *American Injustice: My Battle to Expose the Truth*, which will be published in November by an imprint of Simon & Schuster. He said he was also planning to file a defamation lawsuit against CNN and others who had cast doubt on the provenance of the laptop. “Who decided to label me a stooge of Putin?” Mac Isaac asked. “Maybe people will get punished for saying horrible things and lies.” He said that a foundation affiliated with General Michael Flynn and Patrick Byrne had promised to finance the suit.



At the same time, Mac Isaac said he was frustrated that so many parties, known and unknown, had ended up with copies of the hard drive, which he said had been modified considerably. “I can’t imagine how many hands and fingers have touched that drive,” Mac Isaac said. As much as he disapproved of Hunter, he added, his sense of honor compelled him to say that the child-porn rumors were untrue and that some widely circulated images attributed to the laptop were phony: “The Lady Gaga foot-massage thing? That’s fake.”

Mac Isaac is not the only party interested in the ways in which the contents of the hard drive might have been corrupted over time. Hunter’s legal team has assembled a group of researchers to forensically examine the data and determine — for reasons legal, reputational, and psychological — where the data came from. (Their efforts are being followed by a documentary film crew.) The researchers are not yet prepared to concede that Hunter ever visited the Mac Shop. Earlier this year, they began to reexamine a laptop returned to them by the government from another source, and that device has formed the basis of an alternative theory of the data’s provenance — one that began a few weeks before the repairman would have encountered the entitled man with the broken devices, in a guest cottage at the med spa and psychiatric clinic where Biden received ketamine infusions from Keith Ablow, a celebrity therapist and conservative TV personality, in the winter of 2019.

How and why Hunter Biden came to receive treatment from a protégé of Roger Ailes who appeared on Fox News to suggest his father might have dementia, only he can explain. But his time in the clinic is documented in the data, in photos in which he uses drugs while cast in the green glow of a sensory-deprivation tank. When he departed the clinic for the motels along I-95 en route to Delaware, he left behind personal artifacts: shirts, blazers, and a MacBook. The device remained at the property for a calendar year, until Ablow was raided by the DEA in February 2020. (No charges have ever been brought in connection with the raid, although Ablow has had his medical license suspended.) The agents seized the device and, once informed that it did not belong to Ablow, provided it to Ablow’s attorneys, who then contacted Biden’s attorneys to return it.

The research team believes it is possible that Ablow copied the data. In this version of events, the story of Mac Isaac is just a cover for a more obvious violation of the law, one in which Hunter is a more obvious victim and the cast of characters is more obviously villainous: a turncoat therapist and the political operative who is proud to be called the godfather of ratfucking. “Roger Stone looks to be in the middle of it, and it’s Roger Stone,” a source familiar with the research team’s work said. Ablow and Stone were connected when Ablow was considering a Senate campaign, and, almost a decade later, he penned the foreword for a book Ablow co-authored with Christian Josi. Its title was *Trump Your Life*. Ablow, who is now a life coach, denied the allegations. “On

As for Hunter, the oldest living child of the president now resides in Malibu, at the top of a hill, in a place of sublime beauty. He lives in a sunlit home of modest size and modern style. The Secret Service, ever hovering, has a house next door. He tries to dodge the paparazzi, not always successfully. He looks different today, at 52, than the man on the laptop. His face is fuller. His teeth, once rotting and crooked, have been restored to gleaming condition by a Manhattan cosmetic dentist (at a cost of \$69,977, according to records cited in *Laptop From Hell*).

He has given up practicing law as he awaits a long-delayed decision from the U.S. Attorney in Delaware, who has continued the probe of his finances. He spends his days making art in his garage. Last year, he had shows in New York and Los Angeles. (Several pieces sold at a reported price of \$75,000 each to undisclosed buyers.) He follows the work of the researchers closely. At first he thought Trump's defeat might provide a definite end point to his troubles, that his father's adversaries might move on to other obsessions. Like so many Americans, he has since learned his hopes were misguided.

He deals with his violation in his own way. He paints still lifes of flowers; portraits of Catholic martyrs; paintings of birds done in alcohol ink, which creates a ghostly effect. In one series, according to someone who has seen them, Biden has made a number of self-portraits, based on the photos in the tabloids, the ones that show him in the depths of his despair. The paintings are abstract, made up of colorful pixels, but you can still see the artist in there. He is planning to turn one image — a selfie that he took with a cigarette dangling from his mouth during a trip to Las Vegas, which now appears on the cover of *Laptop From Hell* — into a work in stained glass.

Hunter's pursuers say he has only himself to blame for his loss of privacy — that it was the same carelessness and disregard for the rules of conduct that regular people follow that caused him to lose control of his digital life. Maybe it was the drugs. Maybe he was addicted to danger itself, forever in an autoerotic dance with disaster. So many of the people who have peered into the laptop seem to think that it allows them to know Hunter Biden's mind and motivations. But maybe that level of understanding is not possible, even for the man himself. He has been doing the same thing, looking at that face in the photographs, trying to turn it into art. He still doesn't know where that Hunter was. Like the rest of the world, he has all the data, but there are so many holes in his memory.

*Additional reporting by James D. Walsh.*

*\*Correction: A previous version of this story incorrectly stated that John Paul Mac Isaac sent a copy of the laptop's contents to the home of Robert Costello's son.*

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■ SHOW 340 COMMENTS

# Exhibit 633



IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE DISTRICT OF DELAWARE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA )

v. )

ROBERT HUNTER BIDEN, )

Defendant. )

Criminal Action No. 23-00061-MN

REDACTED

INDICTMENT

FILED

The Grand Jury for the District of Delaware charges that:

SEP 14 2023

Introduction and Background

U.S. DISTRICT COURT DISTRICT OF DELAWARE

At times material to this Indictment:

1. Company 1, located in Wilmington, Delaware, possessed a federal firearms license ("FFL") and was authorized to deal in firearms under federal laws.

2. FFL holders are licensed, among other things, to sell firearms and ammunition. Various rules and regulations, promulgated under the authority of Chapter 44, Title 18, United States Code, govern the manner in which FFL holders are permitted to sell firearms and ammunition.

3. The rules and regulations governing FFL holders require that a person seeking to purchase a firearm fill out a Firearm Transaction Record, ATF Form 4473 ("Form 4473"). Part of the Form 4473 requires that the prospective purchaser certify that all his or her answers on the Form 4473 are true and correct.

4. Question 11.e. of the Form 4473 requires that the prospective purchaser certify truthfully that he or she is not an unlawful user of, or addicted to, any stimulant,

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narcotic drug, or any other controlled substance. In the certification section of the Form 4473, the actual buyer must certify that his or her answers to the questions on the form are "true, correct, and complete." The actual buyer must also acknowledge by his or her signature that "I understand that a person who answers 'yes' to [Question 11.e.] is prohibited from purchasing or receiving a firearm" and "making any false oral or written statement . . . is a crime punishable as a felony under Federal law, and may also violate State and/or local law."

5. FFL holders are required by law to maintain a record, in the form of a completed Form 4473, of the identity of the actual buyer of firearms sold by the FFL holder, including the buyer's home address and date of birth.

#### COUNT ONE

6. Paragraphs 1 through 5 of this Indictment are re-alleged herein.

7. On or about October 12, 2018, in the District of Delaware, the defendant, Robert Hunter Biden, in connection with the acquisition of a firearm, that is, a Colt Cobra 38SPL revolver with serial number RA 551363 from Company 1, licensed under the provisions of Chapter 44, Title 18, United States Code, knowingly made a false and fictitious written statement, intended and likely to deceive that dealer with respect to a fact material to the lawfulness of the sale of the firearm under the provisions of Chapter 44, Title 18, United States Code, in that defendant, Robert Hunter Biden, provided a written statement on Form 4473 certifying he was not an unlawful user of, and addicted to, any stimulant, narcotic drug, and any other controlled substance, when in fact, as he knew, that statement was false and fictitious.

In violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 922(a)(6) and 924(a)(2).

The Grand Jury for the District of Delaware further charges that:

COUNT TWO

8. Paragraphs 1 through 5 of this Indictment are re-alleged herein.

9. On or about October 12, 2018, in the District of Delaware, the defendant, Robert Hunter Biden, in connection with the acquisition of a firearm, that is, a Colt Cobra 38SPL revolver with serial number RA 551363, knowingly made a false statement and representation to Company 1, licensed under the provisions of Chapter 44, Title 18, United States Code, with respect to information required by the provisions of Chapter 44, Title 18, United States Code, to be kept in the FFL holder's records, in that defendant, Robert Hunter Biden, certified on the Form 4473 that he was not an unlawful user of, and addicted to, any stimulant, narcotic drug, and any other controlled substance, when in fact, as he knew, that statement was false and fictitious.

In violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 924(a)(1)(A).

The Grand Jury for the District of Delaware further charges that:

**COUNT THREE**

10. Paragraphs 1 through 5 of this Indictment are re-alleged herein.

11. On or about October 12, 2018, through on or about October 23, 2018, in the District of Delaware, the defendant Robert Hunter Biden, knowing that he was an unlawful user of and addicted to any stimulant, narcotic drug, and any other controlled substance as defined in Title 21, United States Code, Section 802, did knowingly possess a firearm, that is, a Colt Cobra 38SPL revolver with serial number RA 551363, said firearm having been shipped and transported in interstate commerce.


In violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 922(g)(3) and 924(a)(2) (2018).

A TRUE BILL:

Foreperson

DAVID C. WEISS  
SPECIAL COUNSEL  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

By:

  
Derek E. Hines  
Leo J. Wise  
Assistant Special Counsels

Dated: September 14, 2023



# Exhibit 635



Watch TV

HUNTER BIDEN

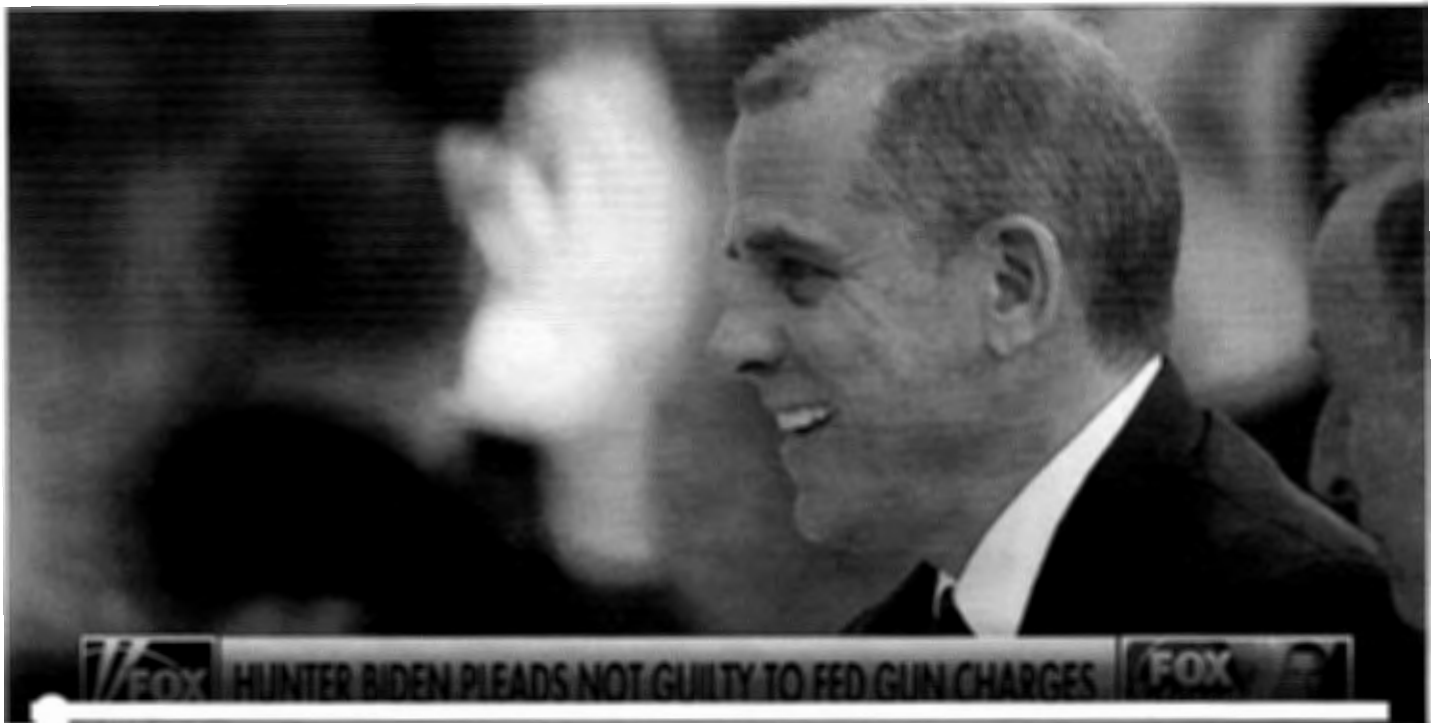
# Hunter Biden took thousands from daughter's college fund for 'hookers and drugs': report

Emails show Hunter Biden was struggling to pay expenses



By **Brandon Gillespie** · Fox News

Published October 6, 2023 6:56pm EDT



00:02 / 04:10



## Goalposts may move yet again on Hunter Biden case, former prosecutor says

Former state prosecutor Elliot Felig on the Hunter Biden case and the president's son pleading not guilty to federal gun charges.

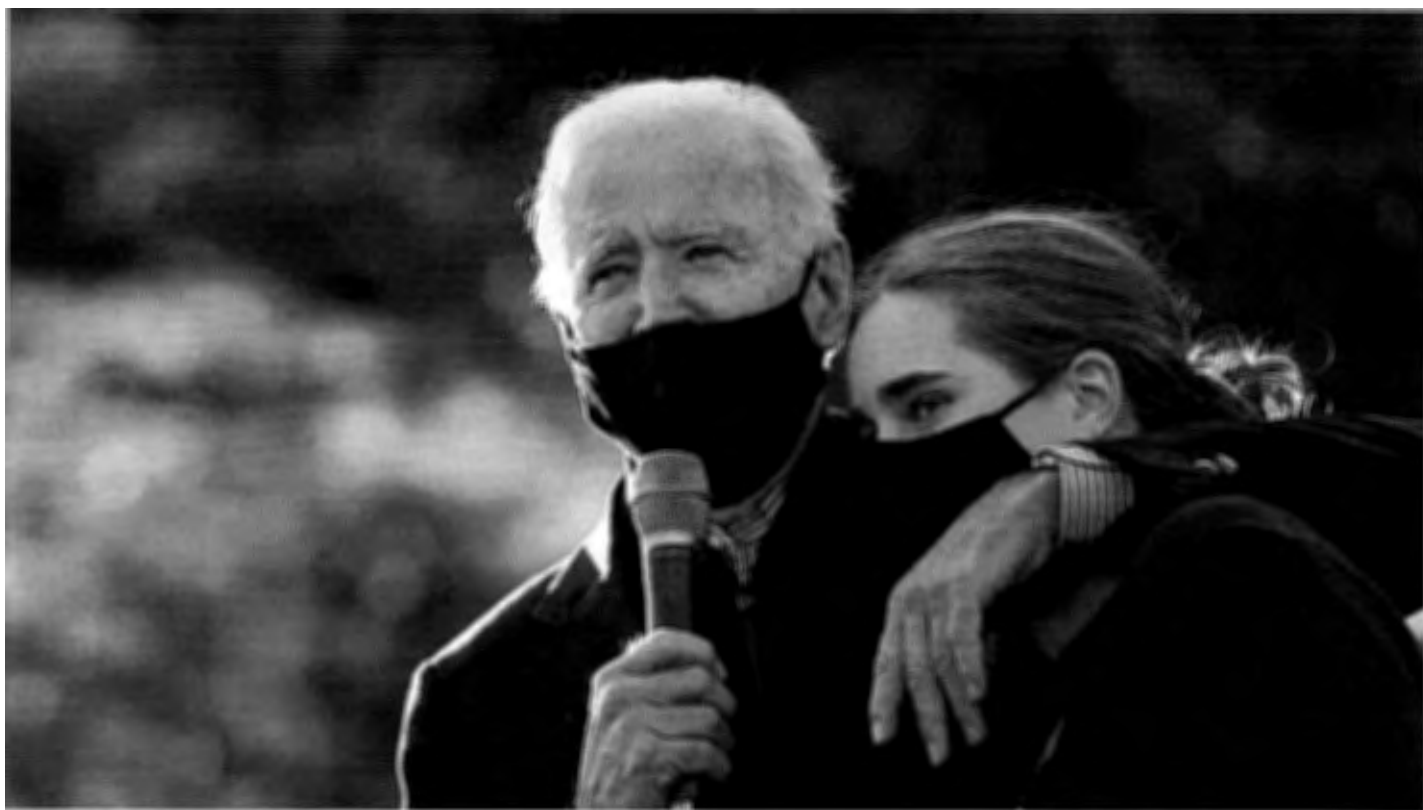
Hunter Biden withdrew \$20,000 from his daughter Maisy's college fund and spent it on "hookers and drugs" after being warned he had just 44 cents left in his bank account, the Daily Mail reported Friday.

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According to the outlet, Biden received an email from Wells Fargo bank on Dec. 17, 2018, warning that he had just 44 cents left in his account, which prompted a muddled reply ordering the bank to transfer \$20,000 from Maisy's college savings account.

In another email to his wealth managers just days later, Biden, who at the time was admittedly deep into a "full-blown addiction" to crack cocaine and spending on prostitutes, said to "liquidate what you can," and asked that no money be pulled from his accounts to pay bill belonging to his "ex."

#### **HUNTER BIDEN ATTORNEY WITHDRAWS FROM FEDERAL GUN CHARGE CASE**



Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden puts his arm around his granddaughter Maisy Biden during a canvass kickoff event in

# Exhibit 654





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